

COUNTRY LIFE

VOL. XXV.—No. 642.

SATURDAY, APRIL 24th, 1909.

PRICE SIXPENCE, BY POST, 6½D.
[REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.]



BULLINGHAM.

LADY EDEN.

21, Harrington Road, S.W.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM.

THE Press on Monday contained a very forcible, but at the same time very temperate, letter signed by the Professors of Zoology (Messrs. Ewart, Sedgwick, Hickson and Bourne) at four of the leading English and Scotch Universities in regard to the mode of administration of the Natural History branch of the British Museum in Cromwell Road. To this communication was accorded a leading article in *The Times*, in which the views of the signatories were endorsed, and the present administration declared to be faulty and obsolete. To put the matter very shortly, the main contention of the signatories to the letter is that the famous exhibition in the Cromwell Road should no longer be styled the Natural History branch of the British Museum, but that it should form an entirely independent Natural History Museum altogether free from the control of the parent establishment at Bloomsbury. And with this contention there is little doubt that a very large proportion of the scientific opinion of the country is in accord; for there can scarcely be any hesitation in admitting that a man eminent in literature or antiquities, as the director of the establishment at Bloomsbury must be, is not the most suitable personage to control a great scientific institution. The letter, however, goes further than this, and urges a change in regard to the body which has control of the entire administration of the two branches of the Museum and the appointment of its officers, from the director downwards. This body consists of a very large number of trustees, of whom a certain proportion constitute the standing committee responsible for the general administration of both branches of the Museum. Curiously enough, this standing, or executive, committee has not, however, the supreme power which is vested in the three

principal trustees—namely, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chancellor and the Speaker of the House of Commons. These three dignitaries, who cannot from the very nature of the case be fully acquainted with the needs of the Natural History branch, have the sole power of appointing the whole staff; and it may, of course, be that they do not always see eye to eye with the standing committee, who have more opportunity of ascertaining the requirements of the institution under their charge. The contention of the writers of the letter referred to, that the appointment of the officials by a small body distinct from the standing committee of trustees is inadvisable, we are fully prepared to endorse, though we by no means assent to the proposition that the standing committee of trustees is in any way unfitted to select suitable officials for the Natural History Museum, or to control that establishment. On the contrary, it is our opinion that such a body, if entrusted with full power, would discharge their duties to the satisfaction of the public and to the benefit of natural science, as all are men of high position, either by birth or by natural ability, and are therefore likely to be unbiassed.

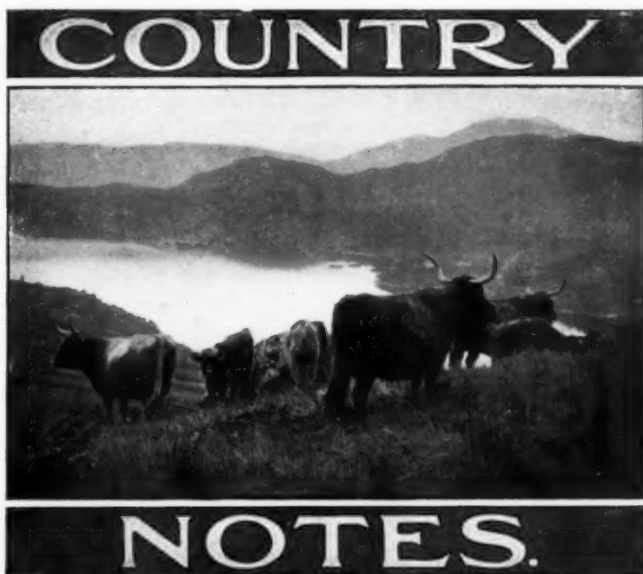
As to the directorship of the Natural History Museum, which is now in abeyance, we are, as already mentioned, in full accord with the signatories, and consider that this officer should report direct to the trustees (or whatever body may hereafter be in supreme control), and should be entirely free from Bloomsbury. It seems, indeed, on the face of it little less than an absurdity to appoint an eminent man of science to take charge of the vast natural history collections of the country and then to tie his hands—at all events, to a certain extent—by placing him, in greater or less degree, under the supervision and orders of an official who by training can have no practical acquaintance with natural history and may, indeed, be prejudiced against science. In saying this we desire to guard ourselves expressly from making the slightest reflection on the present eminent holder of the high office under discussion. It is only with possibilities and the future that we are concerned. At the present moment the Natural History Museum is in a more anomalous condition than usual in the matter of administration; since, owing to the present lack of a director, each of the keepers by whom the four departments are respectively controlled has to report independently to Bloomsbury, and there is consequently no official, other than the director and chief librarian at Bloomsbury, who can issue orders in regard to the establishment as a whole.

While we desire to express our full sympathy with the signatories in regard to the mode of appointing officers to the Museum, and in the matter of sundering the Natural History branch from the parent establishment, we may at the same time take the opportunity of assuring the public that they are getting full value for their money in respect of the establishment in the Cromwell Road. From the public point of view we take it that the main object of that establishment is to display as full and as interesting an exhibition of natural history objects as the available funds will allow. And in this respect the Natural History Museum fully comes up to expectation and is daily becoming more attractive and more instructive to the general public. Indeed, in these respects it is ahead—and far ahead—of any similar institution in Europe. As regards the strictly scientific side of its work, we have neither the ability nor the inclination to speak fully on this occasion. If, however, we may judge from the stream of scientific papers issued month by month by its officials, the scientific work of the Museum is going very strong indeed. We may add that, in our opinion, this scientific work, apart from that of the geological, mineralogical and botanical departments, should consist in the main of descriptive and taxonomic zoology, and that the Museum should on no account be permitted to become a section-cutting establishment, that branch of biological science having, very properly, its home in the Universities' and other laboratories. The Natural History Museum must continue to be a museum of natural history, pure and simple, and must on no account be handed over to the tender mercies of those whose only interest in an animal is to cut it into microscopic sections. All the influence of the Press should, in our opinion, be directed to strengthening the hands of the trustees and to furthering the advent of the two reforms indicated above. Even these will, however, we believe, entail a short Act of Parliament.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Eden. Lady Eden is the daughter of the late Sir William Grey, K.C.S.I., and her marriage to Sir William Eden, Baronet, took place in 1886.

* * It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.



THE PRINCESS OF WALES has set an excellent example by presenting a gold medal to be awarded to the lad who secures the greatest number of marks in the Grand Aggregate Empire Day match for boy marksmen. There is nothing needs more pressing home on the British public than the fact that every boy of the present generation who is not incapacitated in any way ought to learn to shoot with the rifle. It was a duty that was felt to be incumbent on every citizen from the days of the Spartan Empire to the time of Queen Victoria—that is to say, of course, the art of shooting was strongly inculcated, although in early days it was shooting with the bow and arrow, and not with the gun. In mediæval England citizens were exhorted not to waste their holidays in idle sports, but to practise this art. Our reason for advocating it at the present moment is to some extent because every boy may possibly be called out at one time or another to defend his native land; but were this not so, the education of hand and eye, the feeling of self-reliance engendered by the ability to shoot and the discipline involved would in themselves conduce so much to the better discipline and efficiency of the youths of the kingdom that they would themselves furnish sufficient motives. In the long peace that followed after Waterloo, this country neglected to carry out duties which it had recognised previously; but it is evident that those secure days are ended, and for different times we must take different measures.

Parliament reassembled after the Easter holidays on Monday, but the proceedings so far have not been of absorbing interest. The truth is that the mind of the country is now wholly concentrated on the Budget. It is recognised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has a very difficult task set before him in the provision of funds to meet old-age pensions, the building of new ships for the Navy and other indispensable purposes. How he will do so must remain more or less of a secret for the next few days; but it is an occasion on which curiosity is whetted by a very reasonable apprehension on the part both of those who are in trade and of those who derive their livelihood from property. Long ago Mr. Lloyd-George jestingly told us that he was looking out for a henroost to rob in the Budget that is now about to be produced. The question that remains is—what particular henhouse is he going to attack? The sooner he gets it over the better, because the mere prospect of new and serious taxation is causing dislocation of trade in many quarters. Taxable commodities are being withdrawn from bond in the fear that new and heavy imposts will be laid on them, while those possessed of private incomes are in a state of suspense until they know what their fate is to be.

Among the poor it will become a problem during the next few months how to supplement the household loaf. Its price is rising rapidly, and probably will have increased still more before these words are in print. For more than a generation poor people have been so accustomed to an abundance of bread that they have lost the old sense of economy with which their forefathers regarded it. Anyone who looks at the playground of a country school after the dinner-hour will see as much bread thrown away as would have been kept several families in the old days. It is not altogether a disadvantage that the new conditions should teach them some frugality in its use. Already we can see, in the extraordinarily increased demand for potatoes, an endeavour on their part to reduce the baker's bill. Unfortunately,

this is not a time of year when vegetables from the allotment are available, or otherwise it would have been easily possible to effect economies in bread by using foodstuffs from the garden. Fortunately, poor people in the country are, as a rule, very well supplied with potatoes. One pint should not be lost sight of, and that is to see that full weight is given by the baker. In times of plenty the law affecting this matter is allowed to fall almost into abeyance, but during scarcity it ought to be rigorously enforced.

Readers will be glad to know that the suggestion offered a few weeks ago in our "Correspondence" columns by Mr. De Vere Stacpoole has been acted upon. It was that we should supply rings with a number and identification mark for the purpose of marking birds. These rings are now ready, and will be supplied to applicants, together with a few simple directions in regard to their use. They are made of aluminium, and are so constructed that it is impossible for them to hurt or damage in any way the legs of birds to which they are attached. Nothing could well be simpler than the mechanism by which they are fastened and unfastened. At this time of year, too, all can make use of them, because it is easy to obtain fledgeling birds for the purpose. There will be no further trouble, as the register of proceedings will be kept in this office.

A few words may be said as to the objects of the experiment. They are, as was lucidly explained by Mr. Ticehurst in our issue of April 17th, three-fold. First, it will enable us to ascertain to what extent birds return to the locality in which they are bred; secondly, it will give us a better insight into the ways of birds that either may come here to breed or are only autumn visitors; thirdly, it will throw light on migration itself. In order to carry out these objects it will be necessary to follow one or two very brief and simple rules. At the end of the season we shall ask all who have obtained rings to give a statement of the number and species of birds to which they have been attached, and, in order to avoid confusion, to return the rings that are not used, and fresh rings will be issued with the next year's mark on them. It is essential that we should have the facts clear in order to carry out the identification of the birds next season.

TO MY HOCKEY STICK.

Time's up! The season starting next October
Will pass without your help or even mine;
I shall have joined the sensible and sober
Who play—in spirit—on the boundary line,
And you, I fear (my man's so autocratic,
Will rest upon your laurels—in the attic.
No more shall you essay the skilful bully,
No longer glory in the dexterous pass;
This is—oh, do you realise it fully?—
Good-bye for ever to short, springy grass;
For you no more that dearest joy the soul boasts—
The sharp, clean shot that soars between the goal-posts.
You represent that you are not yet broken?
Well, nor am I. Unworthy thought, avant!
Shall you and I endure to hear it spoken
That we the scene of former triumphs haunt?
Shall we adopt the clinging ways of simlax?
Play half—then back—then goal! oh, anticlimax!
Better be gone ere yet rheumatic suasion
And knocks dispose of me and of yourself;
More dignified to choose one's own occasion—
To climb to, not be laid upon the shelf.
And yet . . . one mounts in fear, by hope unbolstered . . .
From all one hears, *the thing's not even upholstered!*

V. H. FRIEDLAENDER.

Sir Edward Strachey, in reply to a correspondent, has given a useful summary of what had been done in regard to the Small Holdings Act up to December 31st. The total number of applications was 23,295, of which 13,202 were approved. The original request was for 373,150 acres of land, and arrangements have already been made for the acquisition of 21,390 acres. The county councils have provided land for 499 applicants, co-operative societies for 3, private landowners for 698, and up to March 31st, 1908, 28,249 "acreage schemes" had been submitted to the Board of Agriculture. All this means that the Act is going to have a much better trial than had that which was passed when Mr. Chaplin was head of the Board of Agriculture. If the prices of produce keep up as they promise to do, the new holders will have an exceptionally good chance of making a success of the experiment.

There is a very instructive paper in the new number of the Journal of the Board of Agriculture, which takes the form of comment on the recently-issued agricultural statistics for 1908. The first reference is to the census of production, concerning which we are told that out of 517,000 schedules nearly

four-fifths contain more or less detailed answers to the supplementary enquiries. Nothing is said about the accuracy of the answers given, and, indeed, there is very little in the comment to show the real attitude of farmers to this enquiry. The next topic is the decrease in the agricultural area, which amounted to 32,000 acres in 1908. This is largely due to urban extension, and the part which has reverted to unproductiveness is probably very small. Concerning the number of holdings we are informed that there still continues to be a diminution; probably the reason lies in the natural tendency of farmers to work on a large scale, a tendency that conflicts with the desire of the public to increase the number of holdings. The section entitled "Value of the Produce" is one to which we cannot attach much importance. For example, the potato crop of 1908 was sold for £2,250,000 less money than that of 1907; but the great boom that has taken place within the last few weeks must upset this calculation completely. It was an estimate formed at the beginning on insufficient data, and is, therefore, for practical purposes valueless.

An important event this week has been the opening of the buildings for the School of Forestry and Rural Economy at Parks Road, Oxford. They have been erected by the liberality of St. John's College at a cost of £10,000, and for them have been secured the services of Professor Somerville and Professor Schlich, two unquestioned authorities on the subject of forestry. Mr. T. Herbert Warren, in addressing the meeting, very properly pointed out how anomalous it was that a great University like Oxford, which possesses landed estates of its own, and the students of which are to a large extent drawn from the landowning classes, should have had, until the twentieth century, little or no provision for teaching that oldest of all sciences. Cambridge has got rather in front of the sister University in establishing and developing a school of science; but now that Oxford has obtained such an excellent start there is every reason to hope that we shall hear as much of the researches conducted there as we have been glad to learn of those at Cambridge.

What treasures lie in ancient manor houses are a subject for wide speculation, as Sir Thomas Browne would have said. Probably if the libraries of the houses which we illustrate in our pages were thoroughly ransacked, the result would be a discovery of many priceless books. At any rate, that is an inference which will be readily drawn from the facts about a volume of extraordinary rarity to be sold at Messrs. Sotheby's on May 21st. It is described as the property of a gentleman living in an old manor house in the North, and consists of the following works from Caxton's press: "The Mirrour of the Worlde," 1481, 100 leaves; the "Dictes or Sayings of the Philosophers," 1478, 76 leaves; Cicero, "Cato on Old Age," 1481, 70 leaves; Cicero, "De Amicitia," 1481, 48 leaves; and Corydale, "Memorare Novissima," 1479, 75 leaves. The Cicero "De Amicitia" is a very rare example. The Ashburnham copy was sold for £102 a few years ago.

In the course of his speech at the Authors' Club, where a complimentary dinner was given him the other night, Sir Edward Henry, Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, gave some interesting details about life in India. For example, he related how puzzled people in India for a long time were as to how the plague spread. The culprits were finally found to be rats, and students of science arrived at the further conclusion that it was spread by means of a flea on the rat. They procured a rat that had died of plague, put him in a cage by the side of a live rat and the other sickened and died. They then got a rat that had died of plague, and laid him on stuff of sufficient area for him to lie beyond the capacity of a flea to reach in his leap. The live rat placed beyond this area did not take the plague. Finally they chloroformed the rat, and in doing so chloroformed the fleas. Nothing happened to the healthy rat, and so it was inferred that the fleas carried the plague. In Australia, too, we learn that the spread of the plague has been attributed to the same agency. All this ought to strengthen the hands of those in this country who have banded together in order to wage war on their common enemy, the rat.

Now that Mr. Swinburne is dead, the grandest old man left in the literary world is undoubtedly Mr. George Meredith. Everyone must have been struck with the vitality of the letters he has written with regard to the death of his old friend. But he has also time and inclination to greet the newcomers. Recently the Principality of Wales has produced a new song-writer and vocalist in the person of Mr. Trevor Evans, whose work has not escaped the vigilant eye of Mr. Meredith. In the *Western Mail* for Wednesday, April 14th, will be found a very remarkable letter from him printed and also reproduced in fac-simile. After expressing his indebtedness to

the writer of the song, music and verse, which had been sent to him, Mr. Meredith goes on to say: "I have done my best to read the music, enough to see that it is excellent; but this is mere spelling, and my daughter or my daughter-in-law (who is a composer of cantatas) will vocalise it for me. Wales has always been the land of song. I rejoice that we have a distinguished singer of his own pieces, who will bring this rich gift of the Land of the Mountains prominently before the public." It is a fine sight, that of the veteran of letters taking the latest comer by the hand and giving him so kindly and cordial a welcome.

It is very doubtful if the very wise and conciliatory policy advocated by Lord Northbrook in regard to the meat warranty question and commented on in our agricultural pages will succeed in its object. The Butchers' Federation seem inclined to insist on their demand for a warranty, and to enforce their claim by brute force. In other words, they threaten, as Mr. Charles Bathurst has pointed out, to boycott English meat and to sell only foreign and colonial meat in districts where the warranty is refused. It is to be hoped that the consuming public will have something to say in answer to this challenge. They are perfectly aware that the action taken by the Federation offers them no guarantee whatever that their food will be free from disease. This depends exclusively on the vigilance and care exercised by the Officers of Public Health. What the butchers are trying to do is simply to get rid of a trade risk and to saddle it upon the farmers. They are playing entirely for their own interest, and considering how enormous their profits are already and how reluctant they are to give their own customers any guarantee, it seems unreasonable and is certainly an unjustifiable procedure on their part to attempt to enforce their wishes by resort to a boycott.

THE CALL OF THE WOODS.

Listen, do you hear the whirring
Of the Potter's wheel below,
As he turns the brown roots upward
Of the flowers beneath the snow?
See the gorse her love-gage tying
At the handle of her dirk,
While the baby hands of bracken
Feel their slow way through the mirk!
Like a ribbon made of azure
Flits the blue-tit through the green,
Boles of birch trees white as silver
Show the floating clouds between.
Larches shake their silken fringes,
Tufted gay with knots of red,
Golden pollen from the willows,
Float above the river-bed.

Spring is calling, calling, calling
With the green braid for her feet,
Calling you with love notes ardent
From the clangour of the street.
Let her trailing robes pass o'er you,
Brush the veil of dust away,
Freed, the chalice then shall open,
Springing golden from the clay.

C. H. M. JOHNSTONE.

The purity and charm of the spring garden was delightfully reflected at this week's show of the Royal Horticultural Society. At no time of the year is colour so appealing as when it comes from the shy and exquisite plants that grace the garden during the month of April. It is daffodil-time in the open, but the chief feature of the show was found in a less conspicuous flower—the auricula. Something is due perhaps to the pretty history of this flower as far as regards England. It was brought over originally by pilgrims from the Netherlands flying from religious persecution. They were weavers by trade, who made it the hobby of their leisure moments to cultivate this estray from the high Alps, and there is something touching in the fact that they thought of bringing their favourite flower with them into exile. It has been much improved since its early introduction, particularly by the work of Mr. Benjamin Simonite, who was known as the workman florist.

It is to be feared that there can be few gardens in which rose-pruning has not proved a very painful operation this season. It is always thus in spring, that though it is such a joyful time of year, and so full of promise, it is also the season of very great anxieties. It is now that are revealed the damages of the winter's frost, and we look from day to day to see whether there is a sign of new life in that buddleia or clematis which the cold has cut right back. Roses in the South have suffered more

heavily in the frosts of last winter than for many a year past. It is not so much that many of them are killed outright as that there are scarcely any in which there is not a deal of dead wood to be excised. Certainly the conditions have been very severe for them. We have had hardy species of bamboos killed which have weathered other winters when the frost has been as sharp though not as prolonged, and as for such things as spring vegetables, they have no existence.

British conservatism is a force not readily overcome, but the scarcity of spring vegetables this season ought really to turn the attention of the country people more seriously to some of the excellent vegetable food which they possess in the wild herbs. The French know a great deal better than to neglect them. Dandelion salad is one of their most common dishes, and they

cook the sorrel in a way that makes it very piquantly palatable. In some parts of England the people are wise enough to eat the young nettle tops, dished up into an imitation of spinach and tasting very much like that better recognised table vegetable. The tops of young bracken are also very good eating. It is a dish of which the Japanese are said to be very fond. It does seem a pity that our own people in the country are as a rule so neglectful of these pleasant and wholesome wild vegetables. It is not impossible that there may be a certain foolish pride in their disregard, as if assuming that a thing can be worth nothing which has cost them nothing. If the example of eating these wild things were set them by their richer neighbours it might help them to banish this exceedingly foolish little demon of pride. And the richer neighbours might do much worse for their own tables.

A NEW ERA IN AGRICULTURE.



SOWING.

SEVERAL generations have passed away since there was as much excitement in the farming world as there is to-day. The primary fact from which it arises is the jump upward in the price of wheat. The prices differ to a slight extent in the provinces, but in every case there has been a rise varying from 2s. to 8s. in the course of the last fortnight. To the majority of farmers this is a case of sour grapes. They sold most of their wheat directly after the harvest, and the majority cleared out their stocks within a few weeks of Christmas. In these days there is a considerable amount of hand-to-mouth farming. Profits are not large, and tenant farmers have frequently to raise money on very slight warning, so that it is not very practicable for them to hold large stocks of grain. Besides, recent experience has been in the way of teaching them to take their profits when they can get them, and not to wait for

risers that too often have never come. Still, those who have wheat to-day are very cautious about parting with it. The Kent farmers last Saturday demanded 50s. a quarter, and those of Taunton market held out for an extra shilling above the best offers; that is to say, for an advance of about 4s. on the week. At Leicester market red wheat made from 44s. to 47s. a quarter and white 46s. to 49s., with a corresponding advance on the price of flour. At Reading grain was quoted at from

46s. to 50s. a quarter. At Canterbury 50s. was actually paid. At Peterborough the price averaged about 46s., and this applies also to Nottingham. The economical effect of this on the country at large may be injurious, but in the meantime it affords a great advantage to that ill-used race of men, the British agriculturists, in which even those who have not a grain of wheat to sell are enabled to participate. Wheat is to the world of food products what Consols are



"RIDDLING" POTATOES.

to other stocks; that is to say, when the price of wheat rises that of other commodities goes up in sympathy. A striking example of this is to be found in the recent history of the potato market. Last year was a most bountiful one for potatoes. Huge crops were gathered in, and they were nearly all in the very best condition. The natural result of this was that in the early part of the year the price of potatoes fell to an almost nominal sum. We know of one large farmer who was glad to dispose of a considerable quantity for 15s. a ton, and for a time prices ranged between that sum and 50s. a ton. To-day £5 a ton is being asked and given. Buyers are scouring the country for potatoes, and as farmers had a considerable surplus, with which, by means of patent boilers, they were preparing food for pigs and other stock, they have been able, to a large extent, to seize opportunity by the forelock and make out of potatoes what was denied them in wheat. The explanation of the rise is simple enough. The increase in the price of wheat has been very closely followed by a rise in the price of bread, and when this occurs the average householder immediately begins to economise in the use of the staff of life and supersedes it to some extent by an increased consumption of potatoes—hence the demand which has arisen at the moment. It applies to other foodstuffs just as well—barley, oats and other kinds of grain are being sold at the present moment better than was ever dreamed of a few weeks ago. It is no wonder that such a change has produced immense excitement on the farms. Even comparatively young men remember a time when they were obliged to sell wheat as low as 17s 6d. a quarter, and thought themselves lucky when they were able to get 23s. or 24s. In those days they had to try everything new in order to reduce to a minimum the loss incidental to growing this most important cereal, and it is ancient news that in sickness of heart they began steadily to withdraw land from arable cultivation and to lay it down in permanent grass. To-day they are being urged to take a course exactly opposite; but no doubt they will proceed with the caution characteristic of their class. For one thing, those who urge this immediate sowing of wheat know very little about the actual conditions of cultivation at the moment. The big wheat-growers of to-day are very little addicted to spring sowing. From it they seldom expect more than from 3qr. to 4qr. an acre in return, and this is not enough for the modern farmer. There is a saying to the effect that whosoever sows cuckoo corn is likely to reap a cuckoo harvest—the meaning of which is that if the sowing is delayed till the arrival of the cuckoo the return will be very poor. But it would be difficult at any rate to find time for ploughing and sowing at the moment, because this is such a busy period for the cultivator of the land. It seems a very simple process for a man to wire from the Borough, or one of the other London markets, and buy a few hundred tons of potatoes at a certain price; but there are practical difficulties



BREAKING DOWN THE CLOUDS.

in the way of the farmer's putting them immediately on the train. In the first place, they are still in their winter clamps, out of which they have to be taken before being despatched. Then the buyer of to-day is particular as to the quality of the goods, and so the potatoes have to be riddled and cleaned before being sent away from the farm. Nearly all holdings are at a distance from the station, and carting is a very serious proposition. It is made all the more so because so many other processes have to be carried on at the moment. Potato-planting is being busily proceeded with, and this necessitates manure being carted out to the fields and the sowing of artificials. Men and horses are engaged both in haulage and in ploughing and drilling, so that they cannot be taken away without the work being seriously interfered with. Again, this is the time for sowing clover and grass seeds, out of which the arable farmer of to-day derives a very large share of his profits, and here another demand arises for the work of men and horses. Thus, if he can get from 6 tons to 10 tons of potatoes a week prepared for market and carted to the station, he has reason to be satisfied. Yet he knows very well that it will be dangerous for him to delay, as the supply of young potatoes is now increasing every week, and soon will preponderate over that of the old. Apart from these considerations there are many reasons why the farmer should hesitate before ploughing up his pasture land on an extensive scale. We would like to emphasise the last phrase, because there seems every reason for believing that sound husbandry will in the next few years tend steadily to increase the wheat area. In the meantime let us try and analyse the position as it stands. What the farmer has found in previous years was that when a strong advance took place in spring, it endured till just about the time when his harvest was complete and he was able to bring forward his new samples. Then a sudden slump would occur, and he would find himself face to face with the low prices



FOOD FOR THE SOIL.

against which he has had to combat so long. Is that likely to occur during the present year? A number of journalists have represented the present crisis in wheat as due entirely to a "corner" similar to that made by Mr. Leiter a few years ago. This view is not supported by the facts. It is true that the syndicate of which Mr. James Patten is head bought a large quantity of wheat for May delivery in Chicago, and made large profits out of the venture; but they did not aim at securing an effective control over the total supply, and were content with the enormous profits arising out of their contracts. Moral indignation is no doubt a very fine feeling, but we can scarcely see how it applies to a transaction of this kind. If Mr. Patten were so clever as to see last July that the demand for wheat would be enormous in May of the next year, and if, therefore, he used his wit and his experience to make what he could out of the situation, we do not know that any severe blame ought to be attached to him. He is only following the ordinary practice of those



SEEDTIME.

who buy or sell, and to talk about his inflicting suffering on millions is mere rhetoric. It might just as well be said that the Kentish farmers who are standing out for 50s. a quarter are cruel to the London consumer of bread. Besides, we do not need to go to Mr. Patten for an explanation of the present condition of affairs. The truth of the matter is that for two seasons there has been a shortage of supply. If we take the years from 1903 to 1906 inclusive, it will be found that there was grown each year about 25,000,000qr. more than the consumption. Thus a reserve stock was formed as a kind of natural insurance against a year of scarcity. Unfortunately, we have had two such years in succession. Last year the shortness of supply was not felt so keenly just because of this reserve. This year the reserve is nearly exhausted, and hence the increased demand and the very great rise in price. What it concerns us to know is how long this state of things will continue. That it is likely to last for at least twelve months seems evident from the reports as to the Indian harvest. Indian wheat-fields are still to a large extent unirrigated, and hence the supply from that continent, which has grown so enormously during the last few years, is apt to fail in a dry year such as the present has been in India—that is to say, the total return, instead of reaching to 40,000,000qr., is not likely to be more than 35,000,000qr. The prospects in the Argentine, another important source of supply, are also far from being rosy. Thus, although it is unlikely that wheat will remain at its present high figure for long, the drop will not be anything like so heavy as seems to be anticipated in some quarters. Moreover, from the way things are shaping at present it would appear almost certain that the demand for wheat will increase in the future, and that prices never again will fall so low as they did in the lean years that began with 1879. For one thing, the nations of the East, in consequence of the stirring up to which they have been subjected ever since the Chino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese wars, have developed a capacity for imitating the West in their modes of life, and among other things they have altered their style of living. Instead of being content with a little rice, they now make a serious demand for wheat, and thus tap many of the sources which were once available for Great Britain. In the United States, too, economists are amazed at the increased consuming power of the inhabitants. Not so very long ago the United States formed the chief source of supply for Europe, but for long it has had to cede this leading position to other countries, and is now face to face with a quickly diminishing exportation. Our hopes rest chiefly on Canada and Russia, in both of which countries there is plenty of land still awaiting development. Much more wheat, it is true, comes now from Australia, but the length of the voyage precludes it from being sold very cheaply in the European markets. The general conclusion at which we arrive, then, is that, although nothing like the present prices are likely to be maintained, the average price of wheat is almost sure to go up to such a degree as will justify the farmers of Great Britain in restoring to wheat cultivation a large part of the land which they have during the last thirty years laid down in permanent pasture. This means, of course, that the cost of the bread of the poor must suffer a corresponding increase. If we judge from previous occurrences, this increase is the more likely to exceed than to fall below that which the facts justify. It is ever the way of the middleman to exaggerate the importance of anything that enables him to clap on a larger amount of profit. If the mass of the population has more to pay for the necessities of life, there will be less to expend on comforts and luxuries, so that what is put in one pocket is abstracted from the other. In compensation it is extremely likely that more land will be brought under cultivation, and that it will be cultivated much more thoroughly and carefully, thus engaging a larger number of workpeople.

BANDS AND BADGERS.

MR. R. J. POCKOCK, the superintendent of the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, has just published, in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society, a most interesting paper on the significance of the broad bands of black and white which characterise so many stoats, weasels and badgers, especially of the African and American continents—a type of coloration which has given rise to much controversy during recent years. By some, it is contended, this coloration is what Professor Poulton calls "aposematic," or warning coloration; that is to say, it serves to make the creatures so marked extremely conspicuous, thereby saving them from the attacks of predaceous animals. And this because this coloration is commonly associated with nauseous qualities of some sort, generally an offensive odour, extremely pungent and lasting, and often in the nature of an irritant. Predaceous animals soon learn to

associate this peculiar livery with the unpleasant accompaniment thereto, and give the wearers a wide berth. The lesson is learnt early in life, it must be remembered, by rash and inexperienced carnivores before they have arrived at their full strength and skill in the quick despatch of their prey, and having once made the mistake of attacking one of these apparently easy victims, they would not make a similar attempt again for the rest of their lives; but, on the contrary, would give all such pied wanderers a wide berth. And since they are extremely hard to kill, this attempted assassination would be attended with no very serious result.

On the other hand, some hold that this coloration is cryptic—to use another of Professor Poulton's terms; that is to say, its purpose is protective—is intended to conceal a predaceous animal from its prey. And this because, it is contended, when these creatures are stalking their prey—mice and such small deer—they are practically invisible to their intended victims, since the white bands, seen from a lower level against the sky, disappear, and thus break up the continuity of the body. But unfortunately for this argument, the majority of these animals are vegetivorous, varying their diet by worms or beetles and very occasionally with mice or other similarly agile prey. Hence they have no need for concealment. Moreover, on this hypothesis the meaning of the stink glands is inexplicable. On the other hand, so armed and singled out from among the rest of the small mammalia likely to be seized upon by large carnivores, by this peculiar livery, an almost complete immunity from attack is ensured.

Most animals, as a little reflection will show, even to those who have paid no attention to this subject, are coloured darker above than below, and thereby they are rendered more or less invisible when at rest, for the dark upper surface is counteracted by the light from above, while the white under surface counteracts, or cancels out, the shadows cast below. Thus there must be some very strong reason indeed for the reversal of this order, as in the case of the rats, which are jet black below and hoary grey above, or of the creatures above referred to, whose backs are marked with broad alternating bands of snow white and inky black. That these bands are conspicuous, whether by day or night, Mr. Pocock has proved both by experiment and by observation on living animals at the Gardens; and we commend the perusal of his most interesting paper to all who are interested in the problems of animal life.

W. P. PYCRAFT.

THE BUILDER AND THE GROVE.

IN this issue we show one or two pictures to illustrate the dire effects on natural scenery produced by the tendency of London to bulge out at its circumference. A man needs not to be even middle-aged to remember a time when after leaving Finsbury Park on the Great Northern Railway one seemed to plunge into open country at once. Round the next station, Haringay, was an abundance of green and open country, for we speak of a time when that sea of villas which now undulates over it had not come into being. Hornsey was an extremely pretty village, with an interesting church in the centre of it, and one could make a circular walk from Finsbury Park Station past Hornsey up to Muswell Hill and down through the pleasant footpaths to Wood Green, without ever losing the feeling of the country. But now the villas have swept over pleasant Hornsey, and Wood Green itself has developed into a large township, though time was when it was only considered a hamlet of Tottenham. Passing on from Wood Green to Southgate we seemed to come to the genuine country, and if the pedestrian extended his walk as far as Winchmore Hill, it was to find himself in what John Gilpin would have regarded as a beautiful rural solitude. But in the years that have passed since the days to which allusion has been made, the builder's hand has not been idle. Villa after villa has arisen, and street after street, notwithstanding the fact that so many thousands of those who used to inhabit Suburbia have been tempted by the greater facilities of locomotion to go further afield into the really rural parts of the Home Counties. Owners of house property frequently tell us that their tenements have gone down in value excessively through this migration to a belt of country that lies within, say, a thirty-mile radius of the Bank of England. It has been believed, too, that the depression in the building trade was largely due to the disorganisation caused by the new craze for a cottage in the country instead of a villa in the suburbs. But the enterprise of those who attacked the amenities of the country round London is sleepless, and the latest venture is to be attempted at Winchmore Hill. The property is said to have passed into the possession of a syndicate, which very shortly will issue a prospectus. Such schemes have been dreamt of more than once during the last decade or so, but we remember that the cry of "Wolf, wolf!" became true at last,

and it is to be feared that the fate of Winchmore Hill is sealed. What the public must regret most is the loss of the famous and beautiful Winchmore Hill Wood, which is consecrated by its association with Tom Hood, Charles Lamb and some of the other literary celebrities of the Victorian Era. This would not be sufficient to account for the agitation that has arisen over the sale of the property were it not for the fact that through these woods run some of the pleasantest foot-paths to the North of London, and the inhabitants have good reason

for regretting that the ruthless hand of the builder should cause to be hewn down the oaks, beeches and elms which have so long lent beauty and vigour to the country-side. We cannot help thinking that it is somewhat short-sighted of the syndicate also. People who go to live at a place like Winchmore Hill are not exclusively in search of those conveniences which belong entirely to the town. A man does not care to travel up to business in a morning and down again at night for the purpose of finding himself in an ordinary London street. Yet that is what the builder has reduced many of our prettiest suburbs to. He does not seem to have the far-sighted intelligence that recognises what an attraction woodlands are to the weary townsman who ventures afield at night. As a rule it is only a brief glimpse that he has of the country, for one finds that the trains up to about eight o'clock are heavily crowded, while in the morning it is very evident that the dwellers in the suburban

villas are in no need of a Day-light Saving Bill. Most of them are already compelled to be in town about nine o'clock in the morning. In looking for homes then they would almost invariably favour a spot that had a pleasant, rustic, woodland air about it; so that the Winchmore Hill trees, if rightly considered by an intelligent syndicate, would be regarded not as an encumbrance to the ground, but as a valuable asset. It should easily be possible to build among them houses that would be a delight to the eye as well as a comfort to the body. It

is difficult to suggest, however, what effective means could be taken to prevent the destruction that is contemplated. Unless where there are common or other rights, it is very difficult to find a *locus standi* for interference, and a building syndicate is



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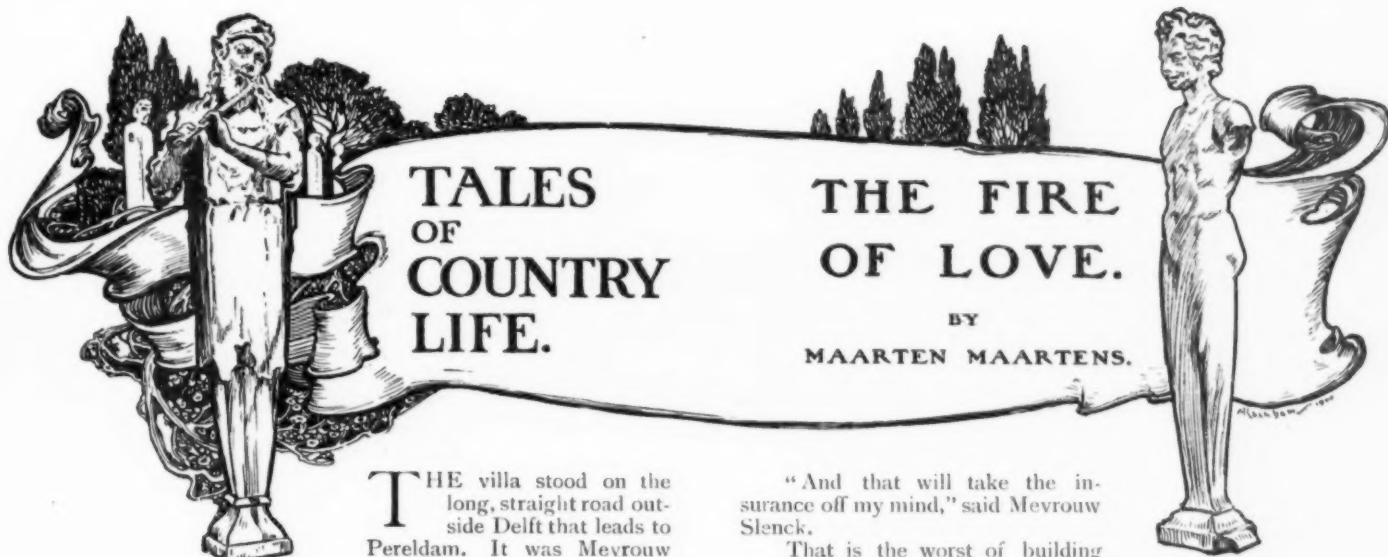
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not one that is usually greatly inclined to lend an ear to the appeal of sentiment or of æsthetics. Its ideas of comfort may be very well gauged by anyone who will take a stroll through the thousand architectural erections that are scattered over the pleasant fields that now constitute Outer London. To make an outside that will attract people who have only the beginnings of taste, to choose one pattern of house and to stick to it through thick and thin, is a custom which prevails in those parts where new houses are most prevalent.

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THE villa stood on the long, straight road outside Delft that leads to Pereldam. It was Mevrouw Slenck who called it a villa, and she had a perfect right to do so in these days when every building is dubbed a villa that is not a cattle-shed. The Villa Rustinvreë had nothing in common with cattle-sheds. It was a nice, spruce, whitewashed and green-shuttered little detached country dwelling, carefully put together by Mevrouw Slenck's husband after he retired from the biubber business and before he retired from this world. When the latter withdrawal took place it was found that the house-building had consumed more money than was quite warranted by the former. In other words, the widow and her son were cramped. The new habitation belied its name; for Rustinvreë means "Rest in Peace," and, although this sounds funereal, old Mynheer Slenck had intended to spend his reposeful existence above ground. The villa stood on the long, straight road, beside the straight canal, by the long, straight line of trees. The trees are lanky poplars, the canal is bottle green and the road is white. The road is mostly empty and the canal is always slow. The trees are often bare, but the sky is sometimes blue. A motor once passed down the road; all the chickens of the neighbourhood ran out to see it; the track was strewn with them. But, if you stand long enough beside the canal you can see it move; barges go by daily. A sign-post just beyond the Villa Rustinvreë tells that the town of Delft is two kilometres lower down. Roses grew and bees hummed, and cabbages spread around the Villa Rustinvreë. It ought to have been a happy abode, for, although there was not enough money, Mevrouw Slenck said she needed no more. Life was as cheap as life can be for mortals who need only food and raiment, and those of the simplest kind. Mevrouw Slenck and her son were almost vegetarians, if not from theosophic motives, and their dress would have satisfied the Plymouth Brethren, though hardly from the standpoint of religious abnegation. Mevrouw Slenck's one aspiration was to be considered a "lady," and therefore she kept a little maid.

But Alfred Slenck had very different ambitions. Food and raiment did not content him. He could easily have gone without. He was employed in chemical works which turn paraffin into salad oil. The business is not a big one and his pay was very small. He was about twenty-five, and in every way humble and uninteresting, except that when his mild eyes looked straight out at you from that pale face of his you looked straight back into them, if you were yourself a thinking creature, and internally wished the man God-speed. And, indeed, he needed that. Not that he was downcast or unhappy. On the contrary, he was as happy and as hopeful as are all those whose soul is consumed by one overpowering idea. His idea was to invent a process by which paraffin could be turned into a liqueur. Paraffin of the cheapest kind into the finest curaçao. Already he saw himself, in his imagination, rivalling the historic houses with his marvellous compound, double the quality and half the price. Of course, he would achieve enormous riches; that would be unavoidable. But he did not want the money; what he yearned for was the fame. A national enterprise. Renowned all the world over. Like van Bussum's Cocoa. Slenck's Curaçao.

It was a pity that his good mother had become a Blue-Ribbonite; but that could not be helped. Perhaps when she was rich enough to drink wine she would change her mind. Meanwhile, to spare her feelings he had told an untruth. Nay, several, keeping up a part. Of evenings, by their solitary lamp, as he messed about among all his machines, he had explained them to be alembics—or whatever the things are called—for the further refinement of the oil. He would make a present of his secret to his employer, and that gentleman would double his pay.

"And that will take the insurance off my mind," said Mevrouw Slenck.

That is the worst of building a fine house; you have to insure against loss by fire all the money you spent on it. The villa had become Mevrouw Slenck's white elephant. Not only had she to paint it and paper it and pay the outrageous taxes on it and generally keep it going, but she had to prepare, by annual premiums, as if it had been a poor man's child, for its very improbable demise. Well, it was a poor man's child, and with a far smaller risk—chance—of mortality. If there was any expenditure Mevrouw Slenck grudged more than another, it was the extravagant insurance money, which seems so useless, unless you have a fire. And when you have a fire—which hardly ever happens—there are difficulties about valuation and full value, and the company tries to get out of all it can. And you never see a halfpenny back again of the money you have sacrificed, for it all goes, and more, in rebuilding.

"That's what insurance is," said Mevrouw Slenck, bitterly. "Waste when there isn't a fire, and loss when there is. No wonder the companies are rolling in wealth."

She maintained that a rich cousin, several times removed, who happened to be manager of an insurance office, had grown rich on her premiums—and other people's. She was not personally acquainted with him, but "My money" she would say when he drove past in his carriage. She was, of course, careful to explain all this to her son Alfred, but Alfred had no head for finance.

Mevrouw Slenck, unfortunately, was not one of those who reserve their explanations for their relatives. She did not see many people in that quiet, out-of-the-way life of hers; but to the people whom she did see she told what she thought. On the day she paid the premium she would tell the grocer's boy; and the little maid, Lucy, a slender parish orphan with haunting gaze and silent lips, was the calm recipient of every impression and every confidence that turned uppermost in her mistress's turbulent soul. Lucy's nature had no tendency towards the eavesdropping of which Mevrouw Slenck most unjustly accused her, nor would it have been possible for the maid to discover innermost family secrets which had not already been communicated to her by the lady of the house.

Lucy, therefore, was perfectly aware of her young master's ideals and ambitions. Every evening when she brought in the tea-things she found him bending over pages of computations or messing about among pots and pans. A glass house off the living-room of the villa was used as a laboratory; in this Alfred spent all his leisure time, employed, as Mevrouw Slenck put it, in "making smells." She had small faith in his success. In no case did she expect financial deliverance.

"I shall die of your father's building mania," she said. "I always told him I should. He died of it himself. What with all the worry, and finding out how everybody cheated us!"

It may be suggested that she could have sold the house. That view can only be seriously entertained by those who have never possessed a white elephant. 'Tis a peculiarity of the beast that he lies (heavy) on your hands.

Alfred Slenck shrugged his shoulders and asked to be let alone. All he wanted was to have time and means for his great discovery. When he noticed Lucy, he was always very civil to her, but usually he asked her to get things without looking up from his pots. It would have surprised him to hear that she was interested in the pots and knew of the approaching invention.

"I have done it," he said. He looked up from his deal table full of utensils and papers. He nodded across to his mother, who was fussily doing some lacework with a click, click, that (he thought) had retarded the discovery a year. "I have done it," he repeated in a louder voice. "Mother!"

"Done what?" asked Mevrouw Slenck.

"It! I've got it! Mother, taste this!" He came towards her, with a tiny glass in his hand containing a sticky white liquid.

She motioned him back. "I can't, Alfred. You know I can't stand oil."

"This isn't oil. Taste it. I can't trust myself. You *must* taste it. Mother, it means wealth for us both!"

She drew the glass under her nose with gingerly affectation. Indignantly she set it down. "You forget I'm Blue-Ribbon," she cried.

"Oh, bother!" he exclaimed, with a real burst of annoyance. He went straight to the door and called "Lucy!" The pretty, melancholy servant-maid appeared in the passage.

"Drink that!" he said. He held out his glass with an air of triumph and command. She looked at him and meekly obeyed.

"It's very nas—nice, I mean," she said, spluttering and coughing.

"What does it taste of?" he insisted.

"I don't—know," she gasped.

"You'd know, mother," he said, turning to his tiresome parent. "It tastes of curaçao. It's got to be perfected, of course. But the taste's there, now—in the oil!"

The girl stood, waiting to be dismissed, with her eyes on the young man's face.

"I want ten thousand florins!" he cried, wildly, bitterly. "Ten thousand florins to complete the thing and set it going!"

Mevrouw Slenck stopped her clicking bobbins. "Ten thousand florins!" she repeated, awe-struck. "Your employer would never give you half that sum."

"Not a tenth. Nor would anybody, as far as I've got. And, besides—don't I know?—if I sell my secret the profits will be for the other man."

Mevrouw Slenck laid down her work. "Dear me," she said. "I had never dreamed of anything of the kind."

He hesitated, half annoyed that he had said so much in the ebullition of the moment.

"Well," remarked the lady, sagely, "you'll never have ten thousand florins unless this house burns down!"

"Nonsense, mother!" he said, quite cross.

"Nonsense can be wonderfully like gospel-truth," she answered, bridling.

Her son stood contemplating the little glass of liquor and thinking his own thoughts. The maid watched, waiting for dismissal, her gaze intent on the young man's face.

Suddenly he dashed the glass away from him, out on the tiled floor of the verandah, in pieces. "Rot!" he said. "I shall never have ten thousand florins—nor two! till my ship" (he sneered) "comes home."

"Or your house burns down," remarked Mevrouw Slenck, pulling out a thread.

He cried a still uglier word than the one he had just used and ran from the room. The girl's eyes followed him.

"His father's temper," commented Mevrouw Slenck, coolly sticking in pins.

"Would he really have ten—thousand—florins, if the house—burnt down?" demanded the taciturn maid.

"Not a stiver more and not a stiver less, if the company paid up," replied her mistress; loquacious as ever, she added: "But that'll never happen, worse luck."

The maid stood reflective.

"His father's temper," repeated Mevrouw Slenck, nodding to the fragments on the floor outside. "Wipe up the mess, Lucy."

"Should we dare touch the liquor?" asked the hesitating maid.

"Nonsense! Wipe up the mess! Can I get him the money? He's a devil of a temper."

"He's the kindest creature that ever lived!" cried the maid, as she escaped to get a cloth.

Thereupon Mevrouw Slenck, shaking her head and smiling over her cushion, could find nothing better to tell her son than that she thought Lucy was "sweet on him."

"What rubbish!" he said.

"Rot! rubbish! and all the rest of it. You think your poor mother's a fool. Very well, we shall see what we shall see."

"What could we see?"

"More than I know of," replied Mevrouw Slenck, looking very sagacious, but really meaning nothing.

"She certainly is pretty," said Alfred, musing.

"Pretty? The common-faced minx! You look at girls that'll bring you ten thousand florins!"

"No, she isn't common-faced," said Alfred; then, as if tired of the subject, he wished his mother good-night.

Nothing happened after that for some days, except that he went to his work as usual. He locked the door of his conservatory, and would allow nobody to enter it, nor would he go in himself. His Dutch mother, staring through the panes, quivered on her toes and beat tattoos with her fingers to see the dust

settle on the books and instruments. She called Lucy to show her so provoking a sight.

"Poor gentleman, he do take on so," said Lucy. He did take on. "He never ate enough," said Lucy; "and now he eats nothing at all."

Mevrouw Slenck treated these remarks as reflections on herself, and replied, with much asperity, that Lucy had better find ten thousand florins in her stocking—it was just as easy for Lucy as for Mevrouw Slenck.

Lucy made no retort to this foolish remark, but went about her business. She did nothing to indicate her preoccupation with Alfred's affairs, except that she certainly cooked for him as well as she could. And one evening, when he was standing gazing with moody eyes through the locked door, she came softly behind him.

"Why don't you go in?" she said.

He started, looked round in amaze, and his brow cleared. "I can't," he answered, in hurried accents of deep feeling. "I shall never have the money to go on."

"If you had the money, what then?"

"What then? I should make a name for myself and a fortune. Oh, don't talk of it!" he broke away, angrily. "It's all the difference between *that*"—he pointed to the dusty alembics—"and—being a clerk all my life."

"It does seem a pity," she said, quietly.

He looked at her with sorrowful scorn. "That's a woman's view," he said. "A pity!"—and he hid his face in his hands. He shouldn't have done that—oh, he shouldn't have done that! It isn't fair to a woman, when a man hides his face in his hands.

That night—early in the small hours, when life, even in summer-time, is at its stillest, and the sleepless seem asleep—that night, a soft, moonless night of fragrant puffs and breezes, Alfred Slenck awoke to the consciousness of a curiously persistent smell, which was not the mere creation of his troubled alembic dream. He went to his mother's door to ask her what she thought of it, and, at the same moment, the maid Lucy stood on the landing, dishevelled, in her night-clothes, her wild eyes distraught with fright. "The house is on fire!" she screamed. "Save yourselves!"

"Where? Why, it's downstairs!" cried Alfred. "Mother!" But Mevrouw Slenck, with a great cloak and hat on, had already appeared, Alfred could not have told from where.

"Save yourselves!" repeated Lucy. "Come away!"

"I want to go down," exclaimed Alfred, excitedly, "and see—" Both women cried out at him; they closed in and pushed him back to his bedroom. A cloud of smoke was stealing up from below, more rapidly than he thought, and filling the staircase; ominous cracklings were heard—a terrible sound, never to be forgotten by him who has heard them once.

"Come away! Come back to the balcony!" shrieked Lucy.

They obeyed her. The way of escape was certain and easy. A wooden balcony ran along the bedroom windows and down to a low outhouse on which lay a short ladder. Down this ladder the three climbed as calmly as circumstances would allow.

"The fire is at the back," said Alfred, when they stood on the ground.

"What a mercy *you* escaped!" exclaimed Mevrouw Slenck to the servant. "You'd better kneel down and say you think so!" But to this not unnatural suggestion, Lucy doggedly refused to accede. She cried that she must go and rouse someone—the milk-salesman down the road! Alfred had run round to the pantry; here the fire was already seething upwards and beginning to roar. In less than thirty seconds, as the three stood there, a tongue of fire leaped into sight through a bursting pane, a rush of smoke followed, and almost within the twinkling of an eye, with a rapidity incredible to the ignorant, the whole piece of lower wall was hot with flames, amid crackling glass and crackling paper, and a long ribbon of cloud-wrapt fire was unfurling towards the roof.

"My God!" cried Alfred, vainly. "My God!" The house was a modern builder's framework of lath and plaster, tawdry and ready to tumble as soon as it could. In five minutes it was blazing merrily on one side; the summer wind came and curled through the flames and the smoke and the falling timbers. Alfred stood staring in helpless despair. What could the milk-seller do when Lucy brought him—him and his wife and a child or two, and, presently, a couple of bargees, from their sleep on the barge? The pots and machines were saved from the conservatory; some articles of furniture were dragged out of the ground-floor rooms. Mevrouw Slenck personally extracted her husband's big portrait, and her mother's blue china, but she fell with the latter outside over the flower-pots. The bargees would have made off with the plate if Lucy had not headed them. One of them facetiously asked the milkman why he had not brought the water he had ready for the morrow's milk? "That would have put out a bigger fire than this," said the bargee.

It was a queer little conflagration, all by itself, undisturbed, in that calm summer night, on the solitary road between Delft and Pereldam. What could the poor people do but just let it

burn itself out? By the time the engines came from the town the house was a smoking ruin. It was wonderful what a long time it took to smoulder when it took such a short time to flare!

After that, very quickly, came the authorities. The Slencks and their maid were examined. They retired to a lodging in the town. Then an official from the insurance office went into the matter, and the result of his enquiry was that Mevrouw Slenck, spluttering, weeping, protesting, explaining, was removed from her lodging and placed under arrest.

The grocer's boy had spoken. The butcher, the baker and the candlestick-maker joined in. Too numerous were the witnesses who reported Mevrouw Slenck's peculiar opinions on the advantages of insurance. Mevrouw Slenck, quite bewildered, could not understand at all. Of course, it is a fact that your premium's a dead loss to you, unless you have a fire. Did the magistrate *not* think so? The magistrate frowned. Crushed by the manifest bias of everyone against her, Mevrouw Slenck could only retort that the manager of the insurance office was her cousin. But this evidence was not considered conclusive, and the manager, unacquainted with the extremest ramifications of his family-tree, had the dastardy to deny the fact. Charred pieces of wood were found among the ruins that distinctly smelt of paraffin. After that nothing was left to Mevrouw Slenck but to sob and to faint with her hand on her heart, while she watched, as so many have done before her, the fingers of the law closing cleverly round her innocent throat.

To her son the blow came like a thunderbolt, but not from an unclouded sky. He did not believe. He did not know what to believe. He gave his report quite simply; he had nothing to tell. His straightforward, deeply-troubled manner made a very good impression. The respectable, sensible maid, with her clear eyes and firm answers, met with even more approval from the police.

When the paraffin was discovered on the second day, Alfred Slenck went back to his room broken-hearted. It was all up with them. He sat for an hour motionless, his head on the table.

"Mynheer Slenck, mustn't you eat something?" said Lucy's voice at his elbow. He looked up with dull eyes. She had gone to stay with an aunt.

"I came to know," she continued, shamefaced. "They said downstairs you hadn't had any supper."

"I don't want supper," he answered, miserably.

"Mynheer Slenck, you don't think"—her voice dropped—
"that they'll—they'll—" She could get no further.

"Yes, I do," he said.

"But they *can't*!"—she steadied herself. "Nobody can be condemned for a thing he hasn't done."

He laughed loudly. His laugh frightened her.

"They *can't*," she insisted. "The judges find out at once, if they've done it."

"People are condemned for what the judges think they have done," he made answer, "whether they have done it or not."

She shrank back and, with a great effort, "But they know she is innocent," she said.

"By no means. They believe her guilty."

She cried out.

"I am sure of it," he continued, desperately. "She hasn't a chance of escape."

The girl repeated the words, as if she were thinking out their meaning. "Not a chance of escape."

She waited quite a long time, then she said, "You are sure?"

"Sure."

"But *you* don't think she did it?"

"No!" he cried, defiantly, all his doubts and misgivings, stiffening against the denial.

Again she waited, even a longer time. "But you can't explain the fire?" she said at last.

"No, I can't explain the fire. Can you?"

"Of course I can," she said, quietly. "I lighted it myself."

He sprang to his feet, staring at her wildly.

"I wanted to help you to get the money. And now they say you won't get a penny because Mevrouw Slenck set fire to the house."

"You—" She listened, but for the moment he couldn't get out another word.

"I did it. When they know that they will give you the ten thousand florins, and you will complete your invention."

"And you will be locked up in prison?"

She drooped her eyes. She stood there—he thought it even in that moment of anxiety—a charming sight for gods and men. He did not insult her by asking her why she had thus desired to help him, undesirous to cause her the pain of the reply.

"No, by God!" he said, presently. A trembling passed over her and left her. "Promise me that you will do what I ask you," he insisted. His soul was aflame; he hardly knew what he said.

"How can I when I don't know what it is?" She lifted her pure eyes to his face.

"Promise me. Have faith in me. Swear!"

"I promise," she said.

"Let me act as I think wisest. Don't, whatever happens, interfere. You have promised."

"Very well; you know best," she said, meekly.

It was not to supper that he descended, but to an eager rush through a couple of streets in the dim gaslight. He insisted at once, at that hour of night, on an interview with his school acquaintance, the lawyer who had undertaken the defence.

"My mother is innocent!" he said.

The lawyer pursed his lips. "You haven't come here only to tell me that?" he enquired.

"I know you think her guilty," retorted the other, hotly; "but she isn't. I bring you positive proof."

Mr. Marcus put his finger-tips together and looked judicial. "I shall be very glad to hear it," he said.

"I did it myself." What, should a servant-girl sacrifice herself for him, and he not rescue his own mother? His cheeks burned with the fever of inward struggle and shame. No, by Heaven! "I did it myself. It was *I* wanted the money. I did it to get the money," he said.

John Marcus, who was a 'cute, wiry-brained man of the law, sat thoughtful for a moment, taking stock. Then he remarked: "I wish you had come with another story. I wish, indeed."

"I come with the only story I can."

"I don't doubt it. But I look at the matter from the point of the defence. I can't get your mother off, of course: they're already resolved to condemn her. But I can get her a great deal shorter term than I can hope to get you. However, there's no more to be said. If you've done it, you must take your chance."

"Yes, there's no more to be said," his hot voice broke over the words.

"Now, what I should have *liked* you to come with," continued the lawyer, "was the news that your servant had done it. There we should have had a free course."

"Because she is a servant-girl, an orphan, a helpless—" Alfred choked in the middle of his emotion, half smothered in tears.

Mr. Marcus raised a deprecating hand. "By no means," he protested. "Because she is a girl in her teens—I should say, eh? Nineteen?"

"Nineteen and a-half," replied Alfred.

"Just so. And because incendiarism is a common morbid development in nervous girls of that age."

"She isn't the least nervous."

The lawyer smiled. "You won't get a specialist expert nowadays to admit that an accused isn't nervous. The most brutal burglar is nervous. You've never heard of Lombroso? But that's neither here nor there."

"I don't understand," said Alfred, giddily, and sat down.

"Never mind that. But in your maid the thing would simply be a pathological symptom. I should recognise it immediately. We all recognise it since Professor Poddeker's monograph on the subject. We should put him into the witness-box, and he would be sure to diagnose morbidity. He's bound to by his own monograph. None of the other experts would dare to dissent from Poddeker."

"They'd put her into an asylum," pleaded Slenck.

"My dear man, what are you thinking of? An isolated act of incendiarism doesn't call for an asylum. Unless she's epileptic. She's isn't epileptic?"

"No."

"The more's the pity!" reasoned John Marcus, sadly. "If the girl had done it, I haven't the ghost of a doubt I should get her off."

"I don't believe it," said Alfred.

But the lawyer did not take offence. "I stake my professional reputation," he said. "No, that wouldn't mean much to you. I'd pay you the ten thousand florins myself if the judge didn't unconditionally acquit the girl."

Slenck sprang to his feet, swaying as he did so.

"She did it!" he cried. "That's the amazing fact of it all! She did it: every other story's false. I tell you, as the lawyer, mind you. You mayn't use it against her. Only to help us all—to help us out!"

Mr. Marcus closed both eyes; thus he looked supernaturally wise. "If you accused would only better understand your position towards your counsel!" he sighed. "Well, we'll let the matter stand where it now stands, if you please. The girl has done it, and she'll get off."

"But, as long as I've a doubt left—" began Alfred.

"You needn't have a doubt. The girl's the incendiary. She confesses. There's no motive. The judges appoint Poddeker chief expert, and she gets off."

"But there is a motive," stammered Alfred, white and red, rising from his chair. "She did it to help me—for my sake."

"Stop!" cried Marcus. "Didn't I say just now what a pity it was you so often confuse counsel. I've no business with a motive. Nor has she. A motive would greatly annoy Poddeker, whose whole theory is built up on the absence of one."

There's no motive, I understand, but pure and simple morbidity. I hope I make myself clear?"

"You do," said the other, trying vainly to meet the lawyer's searching gaze.

"That is as it should be." Mr. Marcus went back to his writing-desk. "By George, how she must love you!" he said.

She certainly did. After a year which she spent in a Brussels boarding-school, Mynheer Alfred Slenck offered her his hand and his heart, the new house he was building and his motor-car. Of all these she took modest possession, and everyone congratulated her mother-in-law.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

THE curiously-restricted range of the nightingale in this country has been a hard nut for ornithologists to crack. It may, indeed, be said that the nut is still uncracked. Professor Newton, summing up the matter in his article "Birds" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," says that "No reasonable mode of accounting for the partial distribution of the nightingale has hitherto been propounded." Yet he seems inclined to seek a geological explanation, for he adds in a note: "When the history of the earth shall be really well and minutely understood, it seems quite possible that as much light will be shed on this and other particular cases of the same kind by a knowledge of the various changes and displacements which sea and land have undergone as has already been done by the same means in regard to many of the general facts of distribution."

Briefly, the facts are these: The range of the nightingale in this country does not extend further than five miles north of York, and it is not known west of the river Exe. Except in the neighbourhood of Cowbridge, and near Tintern, it is unknown in Wales, and it visits neither Scotland nor Ireland. Briefly, if we draw a line on the map from the mouth of the Tees, by Nottingham and Cheltenham, to the mouth of the Exe, we cut off on the right the English area of the nightingale. If we draw a similar line on a geological map we cut off on the east the younger rock systems, from the trias to the tertiary, leaving on the west the older, from the Permian to the Cambrian. Is this a mere coincidence or is the distribution of the nightingale determined by geological structure? One of the Welsh areas where the nightingale is heard, we may note, the neighbourhood of Cowbridge, is on Jurassic strata.

An obvious way of putting the theory to the test is to study the distribution of the nightingale in Europe and compare this with the geological structure of the different countries. Unfortunately, we have not sufficiently detailed accounts of its European range to do so satisfactorily. Taking, however, the few particulars given by Professor Newton, in connection with a geological map of Europe, we find that these do not contradict the theory. In France, for example, the nightingale does not occur in Brittany, which, like Cornwall and Devon, consists of older rocks. Nor is it found in the Channel Islands. Again, while in this country its northern limit is five miles beyond York, on the Continent it reaches Copenhagen, about the latitude of Edinburgh. Professor Newton says it goes no further North than this, though Yarrell notes its occurrence in Sweden. If we take the former view, we may suppose the limit is a geological one, for while the island of Zealand is cretaceous, Sweden and Norway consist of Silurian and older strata. A few minutes' flight would take the birds across the intervening seas, and the extreme south of Sweden is really further south than Copenhagen. If we believe that the nightingale visits Sweden, and it should turn out that it only reaches the extreme south, then the coincidence between its distribution and the geological structure of the country would be still more striking; for there are two limited areas of cretaceous rocks in this part of Sweden. Again, Professor Newton says the nightingale is found abundantly in Mecklenberg, and this district is formed of post-tertiary rocks. He adds, however, that it does not extend eastwards to Danzig, and this does not fit in with the theory, for the same geological formation extends to this place. The nightingale also occurs in Austria and Hungary, and these countries contain large areas of tertiary and mesozoic rocks. The few meagre facts given about the distribution of the nightingale in Russia are rather striking. It does not occur, says Professor Newton, in the Governments near the Ural, but is abundant in that of Kharkov. It is also known to visit the Crimea, and from the geological map of Russia we find that its palæozoic rocks flank the western slope of the Ural Mountains. The Government of Kharkov, again, is cretaceous, while the Crimea is tertiary, with some cretaceous and Jurassic. Thus the facts of the nightingale's distribution in Europe, so far as we have been able to review them, seem to point to similar conclusions to those suggested by its range in this country. More details of its exact distribution in the various countries are, however, urgently required in order to test the theory more completely. As another example of a bird whose range seems to be limited by geological structure we may note the stone-curlew, otherwise known as the Norfolk plover. In this country it is only found on the chalk.

G. W. BULMAN.

THE WAGTAIL'S FOSTER-CHILD.

"CUCKOO! Cuckoo!" Can this, I wonder, be the little rascal who unconsciously sat for his portrait last season and astounded us by a greediness so magnificent that it was not to be satisfied even by repletion? Has he found his way back to the scenes of his disreputable infancy? Or is it, perhaps, his parent, who calls again from the trees across the valley—from the hedgerow elms which as yet have scarcely shed their purple flowers to make room for the green leaf that is swelling in the bud and opening daily under the sunlit April showers? It is probably the old fellow. I have heard the cuckoo here quite early for many a year, and always about the same place. That the hen returns to the same locality seems certain, for the foster-parent that has hatched a cuckoo's egg and builds again on the old site, or close to it, stands a good chance of hatching another.

Yarrell quotes an instance of a pair of pied wagtails which nested in the ivy on a garden wall for eight or nine years, and each year a cuckoo placed an egg in the nest. Then for one year the wagtails changed their site and escaped the imposition, although the cuckoo visited the garden. The wagtails afterwards returned to their old nesting-place, but the cuckoo did not again use the nest. So I think I have just heard the voice of an old acquaintance, and, although he and the

ladies of his race outrage every canon of propriety, I cannot help liking him. We all like him. He comes at the time of opening bud, of primroses, lady's-smocks and freckled cowslips—the season when the air is filled with pleasant song so various and beautiful that if he only had an ounce of shame the cuckoo must blush at the poverty of his own performance. The linnet on the wing or perched on the topmost spray of the yellow-sprinkled gorse is singing to his



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ON THE BRICK-MAKER'S TABLE

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mate. The lark is high up in the heavens, against the dark cloud or in the patch of open blue where there is a gap in the rainbow, warbling his best to his little brown mate. But the cuckoo merely asserts his presence by the reiteration of his name. Then the lady cuckoo flies that way, flirts with him a while and passes on. She merely makes a call and goes on her way to pay another visit. For the cuckoo has no mate, and the name "cuckoo's-mate" is applied only to the wryneck, which arrives here at about the same time but has no other link of association whatsoever with the cuckoo. At last the lady cuckoo finds her old haunt and goes a-bird's-nesting. She lays her egg on the ground, carries it in her bill and places it in the nest of some insectivorous bird which may be trusted not to destroy the foster-child by chronic dyspepsia produced by injudicious feeding. No egg has been found in an unsuitable nest. By what instinctive knowledge she behaves so wisely it is hard to say. Some naturalists have suggested that she may be guided by a delicate sense of smell. The only thing that appears to be certain is that she does not err. But all this is mere exuberance because I have just turned my cuckoo-penny. An improved financial condition is assured and the spring has come.

This is the story of the wagtail's foster-child in so far as it could be closely observed. Last spring a pair of pied wagtails



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HEN PIED WAGTAIL ARRIVING WITH FOOD.

built their nest in a brickmaker's table in an old disused clay-pit. They like to be near water, and generally choose as a site some rift in a rock or a hole where a stone is missing from a wall. But this was not a bad situation, for there were water-meadows and a shallow stream at no great distance, and the wagtail, like the robin, will now and again choose some odd corner in which to make its nest. There is a charm in finding a nest, but there was no reason for bringing this one under any special observation. Unfortunately, it was not discovered that a cuckoo had inserted an egg until some time after it had been hatched. The young wagtails, if there were any, had not only been heaved out of the nest, but had disappeared. Possibly a rat may have found them on the ground and carried them off. One wagtail's egg was outside the nest, but it was addled. This is, perhaps, worth mentioning in connection with a remark of Jenner of vaccination fame, who was the first to observe the process by which the young cuckoo gets rid of the rightful occupants of the nest. He says that the dupe "whilst she is sitting, not unfrequently throws out some of her eggs, and sometimes injures them in such a way that they become addle." Yarrell remarks that it was impossible for him to assure himself of this. However that may be, in this instance there was an addled egg. The process of the ejection of the other chicks by the



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STANDING ON CUCKOO TO FEED IT.

young cuckoo has long been understood. By the aid of the tips of its wings or its rump it wedges itself under its victim, which it contrives to get upon its back. Then it lifts itself until with a jerk it can heave the chick over the side of the nest. Sometimes the load is more than it can raise, but after a short interval it tries again, and always succeeds at last. The egg of the cuckoo, although larger than the wagtail's, is extremely small for so large a bird. Now and then two cuckoos happen to place an egg in the same nest. Then results a



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NEVER SATISFIED.

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prolonged conflict, because neither youngster is strong enough to elevate the weight of the other; but after a while the time comes when one has to go. But the tragedy had been enacted before our young cuckoo was detected. The photograph of the nest was taken without delay, and it is obvious that for some days there had been no room there for any but himself. This young bird was extremely restless. He kept making snake-like darts at one. Then he would settle back into the nest in the position shown in the picture.

The young cuckoo was presently removed to an adjacent stump. To this it was tethered in order that the photographer might have a chance of obtaining pictures in its life-story, and the hen wagtail very quickly became engaged in feeding it. It is worth recording that only the hen was seen to bring food, but she was extremely busy. She would arrive with her beak full of dragon-flies and perch on the back of her foster-child, spreading her long tail like a fan to balance herself. In a moment she would climb into a higher and more convenient position. The mouth of the cuckoo opened into an enormous cavern. The head of the wagtail almost disappeared within it in her eagerness to deposit the food safely in the ravenous little creature's throat. For the cuckoo seemed scarcely to possess sufficient sense to swallow, and several times the wagtail was noticed to dive again, haul up the dragon-fly,

and, as it were, repack it in a more satisfactory manner. Then, before taking flight, the wagtail would pause for a brief interval of rest. But the young cuckoo gave no respite; he kept calling for more. In the photograph "Never Satisfied," which represents this little breathing-time before a fresh departure on the part of the wagtail, it is not a tongue which issues between the young cuckoo's open beak, but the better part of a dragon-fly which would not go down because there was no more room. I could not help comparing the unceasing labour of this little foster-mother with her lot if Nature had not played the prank of inflicting upon her this strange, ungrateful foster-child. She would have possessed a family of, say, four elegant little wagtails of a genus and a grace like her own. By the time she was thus carrying dragon-flies, or a little later, she would have led them away to the meadows, and they would have run, fly-catching, among the grass and around the ruminating, sweet-smelling kine. She would have shown them the stream and the cool summer shallows, where they might run by the margin, or even wade into the water and find variety of food. They would have perched upon the boulders. They would have left a tracery of footmarks on the soft mud. Did her ladyship think it strange, I wonder, that she should have mothered such a lot? But she had no time; she was so busy from morn to night about those dragon-flies.

WALTER RAYMOND.

APRIL AMONG THE HILLS.

"W E met Will Telfer this afternoon. He is going to fish the Kale to-morrow, and wants you to go with him; he says he will meet you at the Kirknewton Road End at half-past nine." So said my sister one evening in a certain April now many years ago, as she returned from a ride on her pony.

I was at that time a youngster enjoying the Easter holidays, and Will Telfer was my mentor in all that related to the sport of fishing, of which art I was then, as now, an earnest disciple. The next morning saw me on my way to the rendezvous, happy to go fishing, happier still to be near the hills in spring, since memory recalls many pictures of delightful rivulets glancing down the braes.

It was one of those mornings in early spring that make one feel that it is sufficient joy just to be alive; a mild, westerly breeze hardly stirred the branches of the trees, which, although still destitute of leaves, were beginning to show signs of reviving life, and their buds, already slightly swelled, betokened that Nature was at last moving and beginning to awaken from her long winter sleep. In the fields the long-tailed lambs played and gambolled alongside their sedate mothers, their pure white curly wool showing up against the green grass in sharp contrast to the more subdued colouring of the ewes. Blackbirds, thrushes and other birds were pouring out a melody of song of welcome to the sweet spring-tide, and near at hand the "Caw! caw!" of the rooks, busy with their domestic arrangements at an adjoining rookery, showed that they too were expressing their approval of the advent of spring. The sky was covered with light fleecy clouds, through which every now and again a shaft of sunlight struck downwards, and lightened up the landscape, the smell of freshly turned earth came from the fields where farming operations were in full swing, and the admonitions of the ploughmen to their horses, softened by distance, fell gratefully on the ear and helped to make up a part of the hundred-and-one country sounds which are so distinctly different to the noise and bustle of a town.

On arriving at the cross roads I found that Will Telfer was already there and waiting for me an elderly grey-haired man, with a clean-shaven face and a shrewd, kindly twinkle in his straightforward brown eyes. Accompanying him was Jock, a famous pepper-coloured Dandie Dinmont, for Will was a great admirer of the Border breed of terriers; and his strain of these dogs had rather more than a local reputation, and added considerably to his earnings. The old man was wearing wading stockings, and had on his back a weather-beaten old creel, the strap of which was mended with a bit of twine; he carried a double-handed greenheart rod of his own manufacture, while his old Tweed hat, or, as he himself would call it, his "bonnet," was used as an impromptu fly-book, and, in addition to a couple of casts wound round it, was stuck full of flies of all sorts and sizes. Hanging from one of the button-holes of his waistcoat was a small bag or "poke" containing worms and a small handful of moss, for on the small streams of the Borders in those days we always carried worms as a stand-by in case the trout should not be in the mood for taking the fly.

"Gude-mornin', Maister Edward; they should take the day!" is Will's greeting as I come up, and Jock greets me with a wag of his tail, his great square head on one side, his ears cocked, and a look of canine wisdom and sagacity on his face that seems to say: "Aye! there should be sport for you, and

whae kens but I'll get some fun mysel' wi' the rottens in the banks."

We climb a paling, cross a young grass field and over a stone wall into the haugh through which runs the Kale, and as we get close to it we find that it is in capital order for fishing, the water running over its pebbly bed being about the colour of pale sherry, and what is still better, every now and then we hear the flop of a rising trout and note the concentric rings which show his feeding-place. I put my rod together and run the line through the rings, while the "click, click" of the reel as the line draws off sounds musically in my ears, and gives rise to the hope that it will soon be clattering in earnest. Will gets hold of my fly-book and taking out a cast unwinds it, straightens it out through his fingers and puts the end in his mouth; he then takes a woodcock wing, with hare-lug body and red hackle from the book, and attaches the gut of the fly to the end of the casting line (for this was long before the days of eyed flies); for a first dropper he puts on a Greenwell's Glory, and the top dropper is a small red spider.

"I think that should dae for them; but if ye find they'll no take the woodcock put on a Maich Broon instead. The day afore yesterday Maister Robson o' the Cairns got a bonny basket of trout, and he tell't me the only flee they would look at was a woodcock, so we'll gie him a try the day; but it des na follow that because they took it twa days syne that they'll be wantin' 't the day—trouts is gey kittle about what they take."

I join the cast to the end of the line and proceed to try my luck, while Will puts his own tackle together.

The Kale here is not more than 30ft. wide, and I get into the water, which is only ankle-deep, close to the bank, and drawing a short line off the reel proceed to cast across the stream, so that the tail fly settles on the water under the shadow of the opposite bank, and is carried down and across by the strength of the current. (At that time of life I had not risen to the higher art of fishing up stream and was quite content to fish down.) For four or five casts nothing happens, and then I throw a little too far and get my tail fly hanked on a docken growing on the opposite bank, and a jerk to free it costs me my fly; however, these little *contretemps* are what everyone must expect while going through his angling novitiate, and I soon have another fly of the same pattern tied on in place of the lost one. Meantime Will has gone higher up to commence operations on his own account, and I am left to my own devices. I work away, and presently am rewarded by a rise, but either the trout comes short or I am too eager, for I just feel him and then he is gone; this, however, is great encouragement, for many and many a time I have fished for a whole day without even getting a rise, but I am slowly improving; several trout this Easter have fallen to my wiles, and on one glorious day I had captured a good-sized sea-trout.

Three or four casts later comes a boil, a thrill is communicated from the rod to my arm, and a kicking, wriggling trout has accepted my invitation; as I am anxious for his capture I wind him in without much ceremony, and swing him on to the bank, a shapely little fellow of about four ounces; this is better! I take him off the hook, knock him on the head and put him in the basket, and again start fishing. Before very long another of the same size is added to the take, and for about two hours I fish away with varying success, at the end of which time I have

about a dozen fish, the biggest probably half a pound. One or two of them I am a little doubtful about, for there are always a lot of smolts and parr about at this time of the year, and the possession of these is, of course, illegal. As a sop to my conscience I return one, a very little one, which I decide, from his white fins, is a salmon smolt; but I have in my basket three fish cold in death which I strongly suspect are the young of the sea-trout, but which I could not find it in my heart to return to their native element on mere suspicion.

An inside monitor warns me it is getting on towards lunch-time, and I wander up the bank and find Will about a mile and a-half higher up. He comes out of the water as I approach, and we lay our rods down and seat ourselves under a tree, while I pull out of my pockets packages of sandwiches, and a small flask containing whisky for Will's delectation. Meanwhile that worthy is looking into my basket, and says, in an impressive tone:

"My man, ye'd better no let the waiter-baillie catch ye wi' that basket! There's fower yellow fins (sea-trout parr) forby a salmon smout!"

"Nonsense, Will! They're all trout right enough; at least, I thought so. I don't know the difference."

"Did ye no? Ye ken fine what they are!" answers Will, sarcastically. "Weel, never mind! I suppose ye were sweer

flowing pool just opposite denotes the home of the big trout. I get a length of line out and cast carefully over him, the tail fly falling lightly about 2ft. above the spot where I last saw him feeding. Following its course with my eye I see the surface broken, a suck marks the disappearance of the fly, and I catch a fleeting vision of a yellow side under water; at the same moment an electric shock is communicated to my right arm, the rod bends, the line tightens and begins to move fast through the water, while the birling of the reel indicates that I have at last hooked a good fish. He bolts headlong for a patch of weeds. Will yells out: "Haud him! Haud him! Dinna' let him get into they weeds; if he daes he'll break ye!" I get my rod point well up, press my finger against the quickly revolving reel-plate and hang on. It is enough—he turns, runs up stream, and as I reel in my line with anxious haste he jumps clear out of the water, gives a wriggle in mid-air and again bolts off. My heart beats nineteen to the dozen, the excitement is great, but I manage to keep my head and maintain a good, firm strain on my fish; gradually he weakens, and his rushes get shorter and more ineffective, until at last I manage to get him close into the bank, where Will stands with the net already outstretched ready to land him. The trout catches sight of the preparations for his undoing, and once more rushes off, but the end is near, his efforts are weak and spasmodic, and I soon have



A. H. Hall.

A SPRING SPATE.

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to pairt wi' them efter ye'd caught them, but ye'd better pit them oot o' sight in case the waiter-baillie comes along and wants to look into ye're basket, for if he catches you wi' yon, he'll hae ye to Jeddert (Jedburgh) as sure as death, and ye'll get fined. Jest pit them in ye're pouch or doon the legs o' yir waders where they canna' be seen."

I follow this rather immoral advice, and then look into Will's basket. He has got about two dozen trout, the biggest nearly a pound, which is a good fish for the Kale, and he tells me that he got them all on the woodcock. We eat our sandwiches, and as Will tops up with a dram of neat whisky, he says: "Aye! that's a drap o' the raal Mackie!"

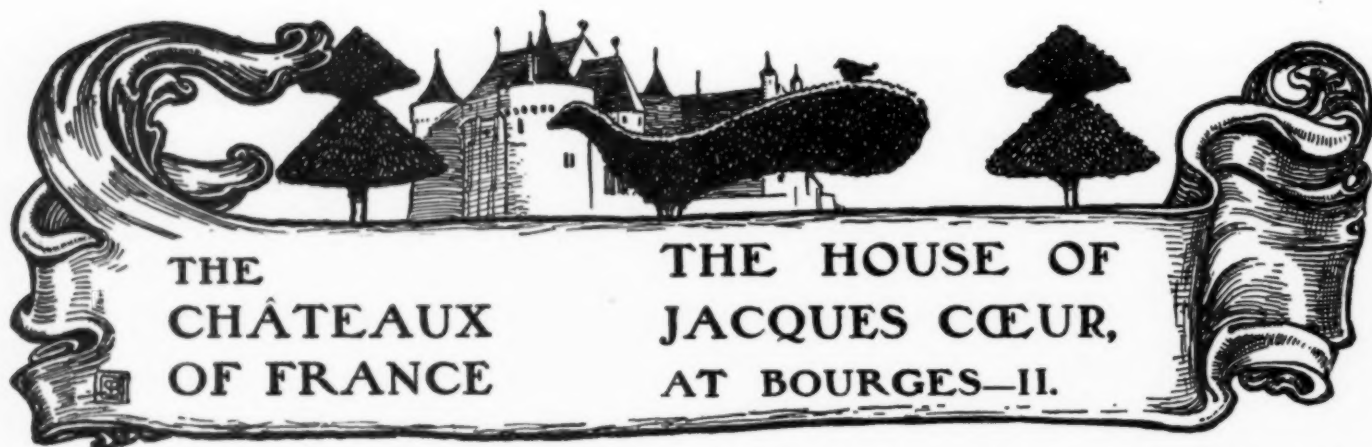
I am now anxious to get my line in the water again, and Will says: "I've seen a big yin loupin' jest ablow yon thorn-buss. If ye gang canny doon the bank and dinna' show yersel', ye'll mabbe get a chance to catch him."

I take a detour away from the stream and, crouching low, steal up to the bank opposite the thorn bush and gently lower myself into the water; sure enough, a ring on the rather slow

him back again; this time Will gets the net well under him, and as he carries him up the bank into safety he says to my great gratification: "Weel dune, Maister Edward, ye played him raal weel, I couldna' hae dune better mysel'." The trout is a great yellow-flanked beauty in the pink of condition, with black and red spots over his back and sides, and Will prophesies he will weigh over a pound.

After this, the capture at long intervals of three more small trout, although very gratifying, is not so exciting, and I lay my rod down for a while to assist Jock in his pursuit of a water-rat which that sagacious terrier has marked to earth, and is digging with all his might to reach; by the time the rat has been bolted and met his death in the steel trap-like jaws of the Dandie, the sun is beginning to decline and the day is drawing to a close. We pack up our impedimenta, and with heavier burdens on our backs than we had in the morning turn homewards, and as we trudge through the lengthening shadows we both agree that there are many worse ways of spending a day than trout-fishing on the Kale.

B. W.



*Puis ay veu par misère
Monter un argentier
Le plus hault de la terre,
Marchand et financier,
Que depuis par fortune
Veis mourir en exil
Après bonté mainte une
Faite au Roy par icil.*

—GEORGES CHATELAIN.

JACQUES CŒUR was amazingly successful; but there is, after all, nothing more miraculous in his good fortune than what should naturally result from courage and hard work on somewhat novel lines. His first venture was very

far from promising. After Jeanne d'Arc had been taken prisoner, and when the winter of 1430 showed that her doom was sealed, he sailed on a preliminary voyage to Alexandria; and his galliot was captured by pirates off the coast of Sardinia. The crew were glad enough to buy their life and liberty at the price of the cargo. Learning experience from his first defeat, he established a branch house of business in Montpellier, which was full of Jews and Lombards and near to a good port of embarkation for the Mediterranean. More important than all, the town had been specially privileged by Pope Clement VI., on its cession to the French king in 1349, "to carry on commerce with the Infidel without incurring the censure of the Church."

Lastly, it possessed the great advantage of a special Court of Justice founded by St. Louis, where the numerous lawsuits likely to arise in a commercial town could quickly be settled, with an authority that was recognised throughout the King's dominions. The value of the new centre was quickly proved. In the spring of 1433, we find a most interesting description of Jacques Cœur's operations in Damascus, written by Bertrand de la Brocquière, who had been sent out by the Duke of Burgundy to Syria. It is worth translating as it appears in the manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale:

The Christians are hated in this place. Merchants are shut up in their houses every night by special officers who open the doors when they please next morning. Traders come here from Genoa, Venice, Spain, Florence and France. The French chiefly buy spices and count on returning by a galley from Narbonne which is in harbour here. Among them is Jacques Cœur the King's Treasurer, who told us that this galley was then at Alexandria and that it would probably call at Beyrouth with his three partners on board.

This is almost the only glimpse we get, at first hand, of Jacques Cœur actually at work; and from what is said of him I would suggest that he held, thus early in his career, the same post of "Consul des François et des Pelerins" which was held by the Frenchman who sheltered some Florentines in his house in Alexandria in 1384. Damascus, which was sacked by Tamberlaine early in the fifteenth century, had risen to be a city of 100,000 souls when the Burgundian envoy visited it and saw the house, probably the French Consul's, with the fleur-de-lis of France carved on its walls. It is curious that the return of Jacques



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GALLERY OF THE COURT OF APPEAL.

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STAIRCASE TO THE COURT OF APPEAL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Cœur from this second expedition seems to coincide with a definite change for the better in the counsels of the King, and it is not difficult to imagine that the growing prosperity of "Monseigneur l'Argentier" may have had its effect in this; for one of the first "reforms" was the murder of La Trémouille, whose opposition to Jeanne d'Arc had been no less apparent than his hostility to Jacques Cœur. The influence of the Constable Richemont, which replaced it, was all to the good; and Agnès Sorel, who was faithful both to the King and to the interests of France from 1431 to 1450, was originally at the Court of Yolande, mother of René d'Anjou, another friend of Jacques Cœur. In Dunois, one of Jeanne d'Arc's most staunch supporters, the King had his strongest friend after the Constable. With them were Chabannes, La Hire and Poton de Xaintrailles, with all of whom the merchant

of Bourges was on friendly and even familiar terms. With the brothers Bureau, who rose from being simple citizens of Paris to the closest confidence of their Sovereign, Jacques Cœur would have a very natural sympathy; and with these men and others either working in his favour or certainly not in opposition to his proceedings, Jacques was assured of the highest patronage and security at home while he was working his hardest at the development of his wide-spread schemes abroad. One little proof of this may be seen in the significant fact that in 1437 Charles VII. re-established the Mint in Bourges, with Jacques Cœur at the head of it; and there are documents still in existence to prove that from this year onwards Jacques lent various sums of money to the King; and in 1438 we find the receipt for a large weight of silver, handed to the "Argentier du Roi," who

now had evidently begun to fill the double rôle of Jeweller or Silversmith and Banker to the King, which is traceable in the still-existing account books of Messrs. Child and Co. at Temple Bar, the famous banking firm which grew out of the business transactions of the jeweller and silversmith, Mr. Child, with the Court of Charles II. From this time onwards, too, we find Jacques setting his face firmly against any repetition of that debasement of the currency which had proved not merely unprofitable (in the end) to the King, but also disastrous (for the time) to himself. All coins issued under his authority were of fine gold or silver, henceforward, and on some there is stamped, by a rare distinction, the word "Bourges."

Still more important were the reforms, so essential to the development of commerce, which were carried out in enforcing the King's Peace throughout the highways of the kingdom. Something of the atrocities committed by the bands of mercenaries and bandits who wandered over the country I have already suggested. They demoralised the nobles as much as they terrified the peasants. One of the worst of their leaders was Alexander, the Bastard of Bourbon, who went so far as to support, in 1439, the first rebellion of the Dauphin Louis against Charles VII. The Constable caught him and drowned him in the Aube. As a means of enforcing the royal authority, a corps of some 16,000 "Francs-Archers" was organised under the royal command, who kept order so excellently that, as Matthieu de Coucy relates, "merchants may now travel safely from one part of the kingdom to another, and do their business in security." Jacques Cœur provided the first funds from which their pay was drawn. His work was recognised by the royal patent of nobility granted to him and to his wife and children in 1440.

It is time to look a little closer at the portrait left of him by a contemporary. "He was no scholar," writes Thomas Basin, "but of a broad and infinitely capacious mind, full of energy in the business that concerned him. He was the first Frenchman of the fifteenth century to build and fit out ships which bore to Africa and the East the woollen cloths and merchandise of France. On their return voyage his ships brought back silk and spices from Egypt and the Levant, some of them sailing up the Rhone and others steering for Catalonia and the neighbourhood, by which means they competed with the Venetians and Genoese for traffic hitherto monopolised by them and the Catalonians; and thus he acquired by the business of his fleets a prodigious amount of wealth." His features, engraved by Grignon in 1553, precede the essay by Denis Godelroy, and



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A STAIRCASE IN THE COURTYARD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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CANOPY OVER ENTRANCE.

COUNTRY LIFE.

are of the strong hardy type of the merchant-adventurer—keen but by no means vulgar; bold but business-like. Jacques is portrayed by Grignon in a robe of figured brocade with a velvet cap. In a painting in the Museum at Bourges he is shown with the ends of his head-dress floating over his shoulders and the neck left bare; but the head, like that of the engraving, is three-quarter face. Probably this painting dates from about the middle of the eighteenth century, and may have belonged to Colbert when he owned the house, for it originally hung within its walls. The medallions and statuettes also exhibited here are of more modern make. There is also a drawing in the Bibliothèque Nationale carefully copied from the miniature in a fifteenth century illuminated manuscript of Monstrelet, which may not improbably have inspired both Grignon's engraving and the painting at Bourges. This certainly belonged to Colbert, as has been said. All show a man evidently of coarser, stronger fibre than the aristocratic statue by a modern sculptor which now stands before Jacques Cœur's house.

That house is almost as much of an enigma as the man who built it, and it would scarcely have been understood, without knowing what I have sketched above, that its builder had piled up riches by a monopoly in the Eastern trade, and had invested them in such lordships as Saint-Fargeau,

Champignolles, Melleroy, Fontenailles, Villebon, La Fresnaye, Roanne and many more, and in houses in Paris, Tours, Lyons, Beaucaire, Béziers, Narbonne, Marseilles, Montpellier and Perpignan, in which his various agents lived when he was not visiting them himself. Each of them, especially that at Montpellier, was covered with curious details and allegories; but that at Bourges surpassed them all, and no one now will ever find the key to all its carven riddles. Jacques Cœur only bought the land on which it stands in 1443, as a royal fief called La Chaussée; and from Guillaume Lallemand, whose own house is still at Bourges, he bought building materials and cut stone to enlarge the old walls and Romanesque tower which already existed. Before he had done more than complete the outer walls, he had spent 100,000 crowns of gold.

Michelet sees in the very position of the house the bargainer's desire to show much and betray little, the parvenu's foible of exaggerating both his modesty and his defiance, in the way the building juts out into the street and yet preserves its privacy. But I think there is no more in the decorations than a legitimate pride in Oriental traffic, and no more in the plan than a deft application of the old site to newer needs. The irregular parallelogram of the courtyard shows its fine carvings on the street façade, the hearts and cockle-shells of the great

merchant are on every balustrade, the statue of Charles VII. beneath a royal canopy used to be above the graceful entrance-gate. A little further on a groom and a chambermaid are sculptured at a casement looking out for the master's return. Upon a balcony is carved the proud device: A VAILLANS [Cœurs] RIENS IMPOSSIBLE. The inner court is formed on one side by the old Romanesque wall that looked out upon the open country, and on the other by the chapel. Within it are charming bas-reliefs above the doors of servants and workmen, of women spinning and sweeping, of pedlars and others. An open gallery gave communication through this court to the various parts of the house. The sculptured scene of pots and pans indicates the turret which led towards the kitchen. Above the door into the dining-room are carved orange and pine trees with a few flowering plants. A little higher up Jacques Cœur, holding what is probably an instrument for minting money (though some think

it a mason's mallet), offers a bouquet to Macée de Léodepart, his wife. Carved on the wall is the maxim that guided his life, "Listen and say Nothing. Work and be silent. My joy is in my heart." The last sentence is a rebus on his name, in the pictorial form so beloved of the mason of the time.

The chapel, finished in July, 1450, is small but exquisitely ornamented, and at the foot of the stairway which leads up to it is a carving of a priest holding a missal and a holy-water sprinkler, followed by a choir-boy, who rings the bell for mass, and by a beggar. Jacques Cœur and his wife are sculptured upon each side of the altar. Among the prophets on one of the side walls may be seen King David with his harp; his head, leaning backwards, allows a richly-jewelled crown to fall to the ground. The angels at the springing of the vaults hold shields with arms of the Cœur family. Above, other angels, whose faces are beautifully painted, display small labels upon

which various texts are written in Latin, the whole having been originally designed in fresco on a blue background sown with golden stars, in the manner of Fra Angelico and the fifteenth century Italians. The canopies beneath the two chapel windows originally sheltered on the entrance side the statue of Charles VII. and on the side of the courtyard that of Jacques Cœur, sitting on his mule with its shoes reversed, a stratagem he is said to have employed in his flight from Beaucaire.

One of the most curious carvings, in what is called the Treasury at the top of the tower, has never been satisfactorily explained, for it is one of the many riddles in this enigmatic house, and has been thought to represent Charles VII. and Agnès Sorel, with either the Dauphin (Louis XI.) or Jacques Cœur as the third person. Perhaps the most characteristic piece of sculpture is the chimney-piece in that great hall which has a vaulted roof modelled after the reversed hull of one of the merchant's own galleons. The capitals of the pillars that support the mantel are deeply carved, and its upper part represents the fortifications of a tower or town. Between the little turrets every space is filled up with the head and shoulders of a small figure, full of life and expression; the high head-dresses of the ladies of the house appear in their special canopies above. Upon another chimney-piece is shown what may well be a deliberate burlesque of chivalry, perhaps inspired by the merchant-citizen himself. It represents a tournament carried out by peasants upon donkeys, with farm labourers and others masquerading as squires and armourers. Set where they are, they may, perhaps, be compared to the carvings on the misericordes in churches, which made just as much fun of the ecclesiastics who sat on them as of everything else in earth or heaven or hell. Yet another allegory, of which we have lost the key, is painted on a window which displays one of the builder's canny mottoes: "En bouche close n'entre mouche." On one side of the top panel is a fool in green with a red cap, and his mouth closed by a padlock. The other personage wears a head-dress with ass's ears,



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A DOOR IN THE COURTYARD.

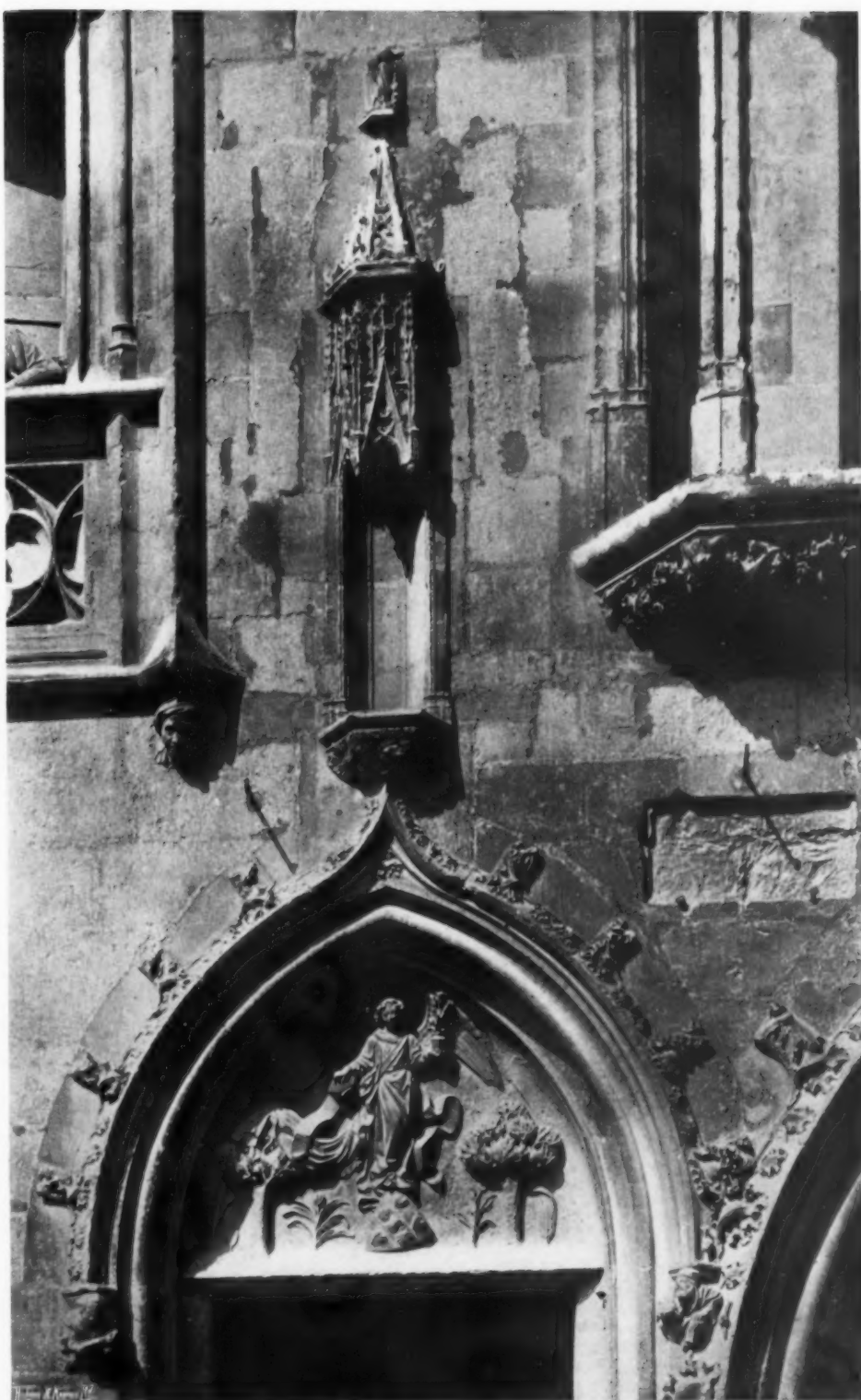
"COUNTRY LIFE."

bearing the motto: "Dire, faire, taire." In the middle are the arms of Cœur.

His famous "Hotel de la Chaussée" was not the only thing for which Bourges had to thank Jacques Cœur. In the Cathedral, which I have described in other pages, is the sacristy which he built, containing his arms and those of his wife, and the various mottoes associated with his career. Above its central window are the arms of France, with a reference to the Coronation of Charles VII. at Rheims, which, as we have seen, had special significance for the man who did so much to help Jeanne d'Arc. In the chapel known as the Chapel of Jacques Cœur in the Cathedral, his arms do not appear at all upon the stone, and only in a microscopical size upon one window. From this it has been argued that we only see this chapel now as it was altered after the disgrace and exile of its builder by the King whose royal arms are in the place of honour, together with those of the Dauphin (Louis XI.) and of Marie d'Anjou, the Queen of Charles VII. The other arms are those of the family of Aubespine, who took on this chapel with other possessions from the family of Cœur.

In speaking at some length of the carvings of this Hôtel de la Chaussée, I must not be thought to diminish in any way the importance of Jacques Cœur's house as an imposing and very beautiful mass of architecture. Its numberless details make up a splendid whole which forms one of the best models of a French fifteenth century town house in existence. Its doors, as beautiful as they are numerous, produce no impression of complicated disorder. Each fits exquisitely into the scheme of decoration of which it is a part, and though each is different, each also completes the harmonious feeling of the whole. The street façade differs almost as much from that towards the open country as do the two sides of Josselin, and for the same reason—one was for pleasure, the other for defence. The angles of the inner courtyard are quite differently designed, yet the separate beauty of each is restful to the eye and conquers any possible monotony while it makes its individual appeal. The cluster of pinnacles, turrets, window-crests and cornices about the upper walls and roofs is a delight to disentangle as you realise the part each bears in the plan of habitation. But it also forms an ordered design, skilfully variegated yet restrainedly composed, which gives a character and strength to the whole building. It is the dwelling-place not merely of a citizen of Bourges, but of a widely-travelled Frenchman, of one who knew the South and East as well as his own country, of one who had not merely friends and agents but dwelling-houses also in many very different parts of France and Europe.

Of these agents Jean de Village of Marseilles was one of the most important, for he had married Jacques Cœur's niece Perrette, and his loyalty in the hour of peril probably did as much as anything to save the fallen merchant-prince from death, or a perpetual dungeon. His enterprises stayed not for their profit on his own side of the Channel only. A document preserved in Paris proves the interesting fact that one of his agents had taken for sale to England a piece of rich fur that had once belonged to Agnès Sorel; and a letter has been reproduced by a contemporary historian which shows the success attending a still more distant mission, entrusted to Jean de Village, who took some of Cœur's merchandise as a present from Charles VII. to the Soldan of Egypt, with whom the clever and far-seeing merchant effected a commercial treaty on behalf of the Knights of Rhodes, a stroke of business that brought him benefit from two sides at once. A Bull from the Grand Master of the Order, dated in February,



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CARVING ABOVE THE ENTRANCE GATEWAY. "COUNTRY LIFE."

1448, reveals the gratitude that one party to the bargain, at any rate, did not wish to conceal. The side issue of the mines (silver, lead and copper) which Jacques Cœur exploited in the Lyons district need only be mentioned as an indication of his ceaseless activity. In this case the King was paid 10 per cent. of all net profits. He had a hand, too, in the great salt districts of Languedoc, where the same industry is carried on still in the marshes of Aigues-Mortes and along the coast near Hyères; and as the holder of a large share in these interests, Jacques Cœur presided, with Tanneguy-Duchatel and others, over the Royal Commission which investigated the revenues of Languedoc in 1444, in order to secure a subsidy for the Royal Exchequer. The States-General accorded Jacques Cœur in 1450 the sum of 4,000 livres (on behalf of the Exchequer) for his expenses in maintaining the King's army in Normandy. In 1446 we find him again selected, with Tanneguy-Duchatel and Saint-Vallier, as one of the French Ambassadors to treat for the annexation of Genoa. He failed owing to the treachery of Campofregoso, and in one of the few of his letters which remain he describes, on February 15th, 1446, the reasons for this failure, and the hopes of eventual success that still remain.

Yet one other direction in which the talents of Jacques Cœur were utilised by his Sovereign must still be indicated. The Pragmatic Sanction (which lasted until the Concordat of Francis I. was concluded) came into effect in 1438, after an important meeting called by the King at Bourges. Nine years afterwards the schism which so bitterly divided Christendom and

made excellent use of his opportunity by securing the Papal sanction for his trading operations with "the infidels." It was largely by the influence of this embassy that the schism was brought to an end, and in its fortunate conclusion we may perhaps see one reason why Jacques Cœur felt certain of a welcome at the Vatican when he escaped from the French king's gaolers.

Participation in events so far-reaching and important had their natural result in the aggrandisement and wealth of the man apparently so deeply trusted by his Sovereign. Nicholas, the brother of Jacques Cœur, became Canon of the Sainte Chapelle at Bourges and later Bishop of Luçon. His second niece married the King's Secretary, Jean Bochetel. His daughter married Jacquelin Trouseau, Vicomte de Bourges. His son Henry became Canon of the Cathedral, and another, John, rose to be Archbishop in 1450, when he was only twenty-nine. The occasion was chosen for a magnificent festival in the Hôtel de la Chaussée which is illustrated in these pages. A third son was named Ravant, after his father's former partner in the Mint. The fourth, Geoffrey, rose to eminence under Louis XI. The influence and power suggested by these facts were increased by the relative poverty of the Royal Family itself, who were often obliged to borrow ready money from Jacques Cœur for their dresses and the wages of their servants, both Marie d'Anjou and her daughter being among those who were thus glad enough to use him; as was Margaret of Scotland, the first wife of Louis XI. Among the nobility there was almost as much borrowing on a large scale from the same source. Philippe de Bourbon, the Maréchal de Culan, Georges de la Trémouille, the Comte de Foix, Jean Boucicaut and many more, are to be found in the long and brilliant list of debtors whose securities he held. For a time, in spite of so obvious a peril, all went well. In 1449 the King, who owed him more than anyone, entered Rouen after the campaign won with Jacques Cœur's money, and the merchant rode beside his Sovereign with the King of Sicily, the Count of Maine, Saint Pol, Nevers, Juvenal des Ursins, Brézé and Dunois.

It was the zenith of his glory and the fall was near. Murmurs of discontent, of envy, of pure malice, grew louder and louder. There were curious elements of hostility which we are now almost unable to appreciate. The clash between aristocrat and bourgeois we can easily imagine. The under-currents of intrigue are more difficult to see. Obviously the man had enemies among the merchants of his own class, whose trade he had practically monopolised, and among the highest of the nobility, whose lands he held in pledge. The very scope of his operations enlarged the circle of possible hostilities. The Médicis were his enemies, and they worked through Otto Castellani of Toulouse. The party of the King were his enemies because he was accused of favouring the seditious Dauphin. The Church was his foe because he traded with the infidel. The People were aroused against him on the plea that he had given back a Christian slave to the Turk and provided the Heretics with arms. Finally, the sudden death of Agnès Sorel was seized upon as the pretext for his arrest. He was accused of poisoning her. There was no atom of proof for the assertion; but it served as well as any other. Justice in those days let nothing escape which once had fallen into her clutches. The prisoner, freed from one baseless charge, was faced with half a hundred others.

Agnès Sorel, of whom I shall have more to say at Loches, retained the favour of the King for eighteen years. Her three daughters were so many guarantees of its continuance. For the birth of her fourth child she went to her château of Aiméville, near Jumièges. She died in February, 1449, very soon afterwards,



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the Papacy necessitated the sending of ambassadors to represent the policy of France, and of these Jacques Cœur was one. Again, he took part in the French Embassy to Nicholas V., with Juvenal des Ursins, the historian, and others, in 1448; and after making an entry into Rome which is described as of remarkable magnificence, he fell ill with fever and was hospitably nursed to health again within the walls of the Vatican itself, where he



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and one of the executors of her will was Jacques Cœur. Ten months later her jewellery was sold, and Jacques Cœur bought it for the King, being repaid by a vote of the Estates of Languedoc. The rumours of poisoning had begun long before, and the names of both Jacques Cœur and the Dauphin had been connected with it. One was too high to be attacked. But eighteen months after the death a woman was found to accuse the other. Jeanne de Vendôme made a formal oath that Jacques Cœur had been the poisoner. On July 31st, 1451, the King ordered at Taillebourg his arrest and the sequestration of his goods, from which he immediately seized 100,000 crowns for the expenses of the campaign in Guienne against the English.

Antony de Chabannes, that old robber-chief, headed the band of the "vultures of the Court," who promptly swooped upon so rich a quarry. The case was opened at Lusignan in September. I shall not here go into its disgraceful details. In June, 1452, he was still a prisoner at Maillé, and was refused all legal assistance; he was to defend himself against the accusations by producing proofs of his own honesty; he was then refused sufficient time to collect the numerous necessary papers and receipts. In January, 1453, the trial was still progressing at Tours. The delay was, in one way, in the prisoner's favour, for the Pope now intervened. But

nothing helped him. Wearing out by constant imprisonment, finally tortured into confession, he acknowledged all the charges save that of the murder of Agnès Sorel. But sentence was not immediately pronounced, and the prisoner was dragged on to Poitiers, still further saddened by the death of Macée de Léode-

part, his wife, early in that year. On May 29th Juvenal des Ursins pronounced sentence. Public confession of his crimes was to be made, restitution was ordered of various large sums of money, enormous fines were imposed and Jacques Cœur was formally banished from the kingdom.

This by no means ended, however, the persecution of the man who had opened the East and the Levant to French commerce, and had furnished the means for driving the invader out of Guienne and Normandy. He was unable to produce the large sums demanded without communicating with his family and his agents and endeavouring to realise his widely-scattered assets. But no delays were permitted him. His property, wherever it could be found by the Royal Commissioners, was at once put up to public auction. In October, 1453, the Bourges

sale was held, and the list of plate and furniture (which I wish I had room to publish in full here) gives an excellent idea of the domestic splendour in which at the height of his fortune he had lived. Among these are the curious items of "two English



CHIMNEY-PIECE IN GALLERY OF THE COURT OF APPEAL.



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prisoners," one of whom was a son of the Irish Earl of Ormonde, commander of the English garrison at Vernon. He was given to Dunois. The other was sold for 24,000 crowns. The same process went on in Tours, Bourges, Paris, Lyons, Poitiers and Montpellier, and an effort was made by the King's Procurator to seize the person of Jean de Village. But René de Provence refused to give him up. And in the midst of the confusion Jacques Cœur himself managed to make good his escape as far as Beaucaille, where he sheltered in the Convent of the Cordeliers. From here he wrote a letter (still in existence) to Jean de Village, saying he had enough for immediate needs, and indicating by means of secret signs the places where more money could be found.

The faithful Jean replied in person by coming to Tarascon, and it adds one more romantic memory to that space of swirling grey Rhone between the two famous little towns that Jacques Cœur escaped, with his help, from the ramparts of Beaucaille into a boat that held eighteen of his own men and bore him safely outside the dominions of the King of France. From Tarascon he moved across the Crau to the Etang de Berre, and so by boat again to Marseilles. By the refusal of René to surrender him or his men, and by the loyalty of his old agents, Jacques Cœur was thus enabled to escape by way of Nice to Pisa, and from there he took ship to Ostia and reached the safety of the Vatican and the welcome of the Pope. Here Jean de Village rejoined him, and put into his hands so much money collected from various private sources that the exiled merchant was enabled to be of almost as much help to the Pope as he had been to his ungrateful Sovereign.

Within a very short time Calixtus III., determined to make some counter-stroke against the dismay caused throughout Christendom by the sack of Constantinople, appointed Jacques Cœur captain-general of the Church's expedition against the infidels. His first port was the friendly city of Rhodes. From there he sailed to Chios, where in November, 1456, he fell ill of a fever or from wounds. Before his death he wrote to Charles VII. recommending to the royal mercy those children whose father the French king had banished. He died on the 25th of the month and was buried in the Church of the Cordeliers in Chios, where the



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THE KNOCKER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

This is certainly an early date for the hoopoe, which may be looked for generally towards the third week in April. Hoopoes are such remarkable and handsome birds that, unfortunately, they are far too often sacrificed to the misplaced zeal of the curious and the collector. There cannot be a doubt that if they were left unmolested a good many would nest with us and successfully rear their young. There are many records of their nesting in

years gone by in the counties of Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Hants, Wilts, Dorset and Devon, and it is probable that in secluded places a pair or two still manage to escape detection and rear their nestlings. Years ago these birds were known to breed on the banks of the river Lenthay, near Sherborne. Their nests were several times taken by schoolboys, and the birds themselves were known to the lads as "hoops." In the South of Ireland the hoopoe is still a fairly well-known migrant.

HABITS OF THE HOPOE.

Hoopoes are classed by scientists in the sub-order coraciæ, which includes the rollers, motmots and todies, kingfishers, bee-eaters and hornbills. Preferably they breed in a hole in the decayed wood of trees, sometimes in crevices in walls or rocks.



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SCULPTURE OVER DOOR TO THE KITCHENS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

French sailors saw his tomb in 1501.

His memory was only partially vindicated by his children, but their efforts have proved at any rate that Michelet's contemptuous estimate of his character and attainments must be revised. His "procès de réhabilitation," as useless as was Jeanne d'Arc's, was necessarily not so complete, although it lasted thirty years. But it resulted in the restitution to his heirs of much of his property in Bourges and elsewhere. His famous house was sold for 15,000 livres to Antoine Turpin in 1501, and by him sold again to Claude de l'Aubespine in 1552, by whose descendant it was passed on to Colbert, the Minister of Louis XIV., in 1679. He sold it to the town of Bourges for 33,000 livres in 1682, and it has not changed hands again. By a curious and somewhat sarcastic revolution of fate, considering the injustice suffered by its builder, it was made the High Court of the Province.

THEODORE ANDREA COOK.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE HOPOE.

THE first spring migrant of which I have a note this year was a hoopoe, which was seen on the lawn of a friend of mine (Major Molineux) at Eastbourne on the morning of March 30th. The bird appeared to have just reached the coast on migration, and remained running about the lawn for twenty minutes.

Mr. Swinhoe has recorded the fact that in China, where these birds often make their nesting-places in holes in the coffins of the native people, the Chinese have a great dislike for them and call them coffin-birds. Pallas, the well-known naturalist, once found a nest of hoopoes, containing seven young birds, actually placed in the decomposed body of a native. It is, perhaps, worthy of remark that the nests of these birds are themselves by no means pleasant things, surrounded or patched as they often are by evil-smelling ordure

of their habits they closely resemble their distant relatives, the hornbills. When a hoopoe devours a beetle or grub it throws or jerks the food into its gullet just as the hornbills toss up and catch grapes or other food when tendered to them at the Zoological Gardens. I have noticed exactly the same habit in the lesser hoopoe in South Africa, a bird which also feeds much upon the ground. Our British hoopoe breeds as far North as Denmark and the South of Sweden. It is known all over Europe and is



IN BOURGES CATHEDRAL: DOOR IN SACRISTY IN NORTH CHOIR AISLE BUILT BY JACQUES CŒUR.

and foul with droppings. The habits of the bird, in fact, by no means correspond with the great beauty of its appearance. The female hoopoe is not imprisoned in her nest quite so completely as the hornbill, which is so plastered in by her mate that only an orifice is left for feeding purposes; but, as with the hornbills, the male hoopoe feeds the hen bird during incubation, and the latter never leaves the nest during that period. These birds feed much upon the ground, where they search busily for worms, grubs, beetles, caterpillars, etc. Mr. J. E. Harting has well remarked that in another

abundant in the Mediterranean countries and around the Black Sea. Southward it penetrates Africa during the winter season as far south as Abyssinia and Senegambia. All through temperate Asia it is known, even as far eastward as Japan. Occasional stragglers have been identified as far North as the North of Norway and Russia and even Spitzbergen. It is scarcely to be doubted that these striking birds were once far more numerous in England than they now are. The gradual clearance of forests and modern persecution sufficiently account for their present scarcity.

SPRING MIGRANTS.

The migrants are surely late this year? I heard the chiff-chaff for the first time on April 1st, and the little creature, which was piping very feebly, had evidently only just arrived. A few others of this species have, I see, been reported on March 29th, and it is evident that these small yet hardy wanderers are beyond their usual time of arrival this season. Chiff-chaffs have been heard and seen in the South of England as early as March 2nd, and in a normal spring one expects to come across them occasionally by the third week in that month. But other spring birds have delayed their passage somewhat this season. Wheatears, of which I have seen one only, are at this time of writing (April 3rd) decidedly scarce and have been reported from very few places. A swallow, a sand-martin, a willow-wren, a wryneck and a stone-curlew are the only other reported arrivals that I have yet heard of, in addition to the hoopoe already mentioned. Almost all these were observed during the last day or two of March. Even the waders, which one expects to see at the end of March dropping on our shores on the Northward migration, are at present very little in evidence. I have not yet seen a sandpiper, which I expect to do in normal seasons by this date. Still, some of the birds are moving North evidently. Last Sunday (March 28th) a huge flock of geese, believed to be brent, were observed making their way up Channel near the coast-line. These birds were, no doubt, on their long trek North to those far-off breeding haunts of theirs in Kolguyef, Nova Zembla, Spitzbergen, Franz Joseph Land and elsewhere.

BRENT GEESSE IN THE SOUTH.

Although these hardy wildfowl are plentiful enough round our British Coast-line, even in the hardest of winters, many of them choose to go much further South and are well known in the Mediterranean and even on the North African Coast. I have seen them on the Moorish Coast-line in winter as far south as Casablanca, and they have been reported even from Mogador, some little way further down the Atlantic, seaward of Morocco. Eastward, along the Mediterranean, this fine goose reaches the Asiatic Coast. Probably the vast "gaggle" seen making their way North along the East Sussex Coast a few days since were brents coming up from the Mediterranean, or from the coast-line of Portugal. It is a far cry indeed from those sunny regions to the breeding haunts of these birds in desolate Kolguyef, or some other land space of the gloomy Arctic. Yet even that long trek is not to be compared with the enormous flights of so many of the waders, which extend from the southern shores of Cape Colony to the far North. By the way, "the far North" is a rather indefinite expression. As Pope says:

"Ask where's the North?—at York, 'tis on the Tweed,
In Scotland at the Orcaides, and there,
At Nova Zembla, or the Lord knows where."

PALLAS'S GRASSHOPPER WARBLER.

It cannot be doubted that many rare foreign birds, which make their way to these islands, either perish unknown, or from their small size and inconspicuous colouring manage to escape observation, even in these days, when scores of keen and Argus-eyed naturalists are to be found in every county. Still, it is indubitable that, thanks to the care and research of modern observers and the great increase in the number of those who take an intelligent interest in birds, new species are being steadily added to the British list. Not so long since, my friend, Mr. E. C. Arnold, procured on the coast of Norfolk the first-known British example of the Siberian stonechat. This odd-looking little creature is now to be seen in the very interesting collection presented by Mr. Arnold to the museum at the Eastbourne Technical Institute and Library. One of the latest additions to the list of British birds is another strange-looking little creature, Pallas's grasshopper warbler (figured in "British Birds," Vol. II., No. 7), a Siberian species of which a specimen in good condition was picked up dead at the Rockable Lighthouse, off the coast of County Dublin, in September last. The bird has been humorously described as in appearance a cross between a hedge-sparrow and a grasshopper warbler; but Mr. R. M. Barrington, who gives an account of it in "British Birds," well points out that it is "markedly larger than the latter bird and is of a reddish brown on the upper side, the feathers being striped with black, while the tail feathers are tipped with greyish white." The bird was a male. This is a rare specimen, indeed, for, so far as can be ascertained, only one other example has been hitherto identified in Europe. This was a young bird caught at the Heligoland Lighthouse as far back as 1856, and identified by the great observer, Heinrich Gütke. How many rare specimens must have perished, unnoticed and unknown, before the assistance of lighthouse keepers and their assistants was directed to this branch of the study of Nature!

H. A. B.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE EPICURE IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN.

IN my previous article I dealt with the things that were generally eatable and procurable at the end of a hard winter like the past—not many, but all the more precious for that reason. Now is a good season to deal with each separately, and after fixing a place in the garden for each thing worth trying, to make up our minds to grow them not merely as a curiosity, but in a practical manner, so that they may be gathered in condition to use. Among the best of such is the Sweet Corn. In all the southern and milder parts of the country, and also the Home Counties and Midlands, it can be grown in all favoured spots. I do not know what its northern limit may be, but it is available over large areas, and these areas might supply the northern market when we have become used to it and know the best kinds to grow.

SWEET CORN.

Every distinct climate gives rise to good things of its own, as the fields of America do to the excellent Sweet Corn. The kinds

grown there are selections, raised over a large area of the country, from the Indian Corn—which is better adapted for the farm than for cookery—and are very hardy and early. Many products of the fields there we cannot grow; but happily this excellent vegetable can be grown well in our country, at least in the southern and warmer parts of England and Ireland. Being a plant of tropical regions, we should give it the best and warmest soil and places in the garden, and a little shelter also, as the growth is so vigorous in some kinds. As supplied to the London market it seems a coarse and not very good kind, and therefore to succeed we ought to be careful to get the best and earliest varieties, especially for our northern country. The cultivation is simple enough. In the coldest gardens it should be sown in boxes or pots and turned out at the end of May; in warm gardens and warm soils it might even be sown in the open air, all the more if a cloche is used to get it up. In either case it is very simple; the main thing is to get used to the selection and cookery of cobs, being careful to use those of medium size. If gathered too young before the fertilisation is sufficient we do not get good cobs, and if hard and old they are worse still. The darkening of the stamens shows that the cob is ready. A little experience will help the cook to serve the seed in its best state on the cob. Rats are great enemies, and in my case they got in one night and cut down the whole crop. Then, fitness for our climate being proved, the next thing is to be sure of early and good varieties.

The kind sent to Covent Garden is big and coarse, and we must keep away from common varieties if we are to have the best garden sorts. Our seedsmen pay so little attention to the plant—some do not even mention it—that I am forced to go to the American houses, and particularly the good old house of Thorburn and Co. in Barclay Street, New York, whose Early Cory and Golden Bantam are very good for our country and climate. We should always try the hardy and early kinds, and we have not only to find kinds that will be free in our climate, but we must find out those kinds that give the best cob for the cook, moderate in size and regular in setting. Burpee of Philadelphia praises very much four kinds, namely, Crosby's Early, Country Gentleman, Extra Early Adams and Howling Mob. Sutton mentions their Very Early Dwarf and Quarantine, Carter mentions only one, viz., the firm's own Improved, and Vilmorin of Paris mentions an Extra Early Dwarf kind; but none of our European seedsmen seems to know the importance of the plant. Having got our good and early kinds, the next thing to think of is cultivation. Sow in April in boxes or pots and plant out in May about a yard apart each way; or in warm, sheltered gardens you can sow in the open air, a few grains in each batch, and thin afterwards to one. If any cloches are handy they will, of course, help very much. An American friend seeing my crop lavish in side shoots, said "We always keep the plants to one stem, taking off side shoots." Light rich soil in a warm corner is desirable, and many gardens throughout the Southern and Midland parts of England and Ireland have all the conditions necessary.

The plant gives us much delicate and nourishing food, and when very often Peas in dry soils get rather scarce, it is worth the attention of our seedsmen to make trials and get the very best kinds for our climate.

W. ROBINSON.

SOME HARDY BAMBOOS.

DURING the last decade the culture of those Bamboos which are hardy, or nearly so, in this country has made enormous strides, and in many large gardens a portion may be found given up to these graceful and pleasing shrubs. The devoting of a part of the garden to them is a wise provision, for two reasons, viz., because during the spring and early summer months, say from early March until the end of June or early in July, the foliage is very seared and rusty-looking, consequently, if planted among other kinds of shrubs, they would at this season be quite an eyesore; and also, by grouping them together a site can be chosen that is sheltered from keen east and north winds, which frequently do much damage to young growth in spring. Bamboos naturally like a rich soil, and such should, if possible, be provided for them, this being well trenched previous to planting. The early part of May is the best time of the whole year to plant, as young canes are then being pushed up from the bases of the clumps, and propagation, effected by dividing the old plants, may be carried out at the same time. When once established a good dressing of well-rotted manure applied each year in March, with an occasional thinning of the old rods, cutting these out right at the base, will be practically all the attention the plants require. With flowering the life of a bamboo generally terminates, but as this does not usually occur until the plant has attained a good age, this should not deter anyone from planting. The following are well-known and tried sorts that can be relied upon to give satisfaction in most localities: *Arundinaria japonica* (Bambusa Metake), *A. nitida*, *A. Simonii*, *A. Kumasasa* (Bambusa palmata), *Phyllostachys Castillonis*, *P. fastuosa*, *P. Henonis* (good for exposed position) and *P. viridi-glaucescens*.

SOME BEAUTIFUL HARDY BROOMS.

Our native Broom, *Cytisus scoparius*, is one of the most beautiful wayside shrubs during late spring, its wealth of golden blossoms rendering it a most conspicuous object. In addition to several very handsome forms of this Broom, there are many other beautiful varieties known to gardeners, and as they will thrive in comparatively poor and sandy soil, their value in the

garden should not be overlooked. Unfortunately, they are very difficult to transplant successfully in the ordinary way, and young plants should be obtained in pots, from whence they can be successfully planted out at almost any season of the year, providing water is given them should the weather prove dry immediately afterwards. These young plants will in most cases need a slight cutting back annually for the first two or three years to induce them to grow sturdily and branch freely, after which very little, if any, attention is needed. The earliest to bloom is that known as *Cytisus præcox*, a slender-growing shrub, the semi-pendulous, wand-like branches of which are clothed with small, pale sulphur-coloured blossoms. *C. scoparius andreanus* is a lovely form of the common Broom, which should find a place in every shrubbery; the bright,

golden yellow flowers have reddish brown blotches on the side petals, thus giving the flowers a warm, attractive appearance that is difficult to equal in the spring months. The Moonlight Broom (*C. sulphureus*) is a rather low-growing shrub, the branches of which are clothed with large sulphur-coloured flowers of much grace. The white Spanish Broom (*C. alba*) is a native of Spain and Portugal, and is more erect in habit than many others; it attains a height of about 6ft. Two that are suitable for the rockery are *C. kewensis* and *C. procumbens*, both being of dwarf, trailing habit. The first named has pale sulphur-coloured flowers, which are produced very freely, and the latter has yellow blossoms. *C. biflorus* bears its yellow flowers in pairs, and these open a week or two earlier than the majority of those named. F. W. H.

LITERATURE.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

A FEW nights ago, after, as so many have been doing just now, reading in *The Works of Charles Algernon Swinburne* (Chatto and Windus), I fell asleep and dreamed. In my dream I had been transported to an island where men lived in small huts, and on each hut was a legend intimating that here Doubt was not admitted. Every man pursued his calling with a certainty that he possessed the best method. They followed divers occupations, and all with the same assurance. As I marvelled, there appeared one like Wordsworth's poet, "in russet mantle clad," and his face was kind and wise and sweet, but bore traces of struggle and sorrow like that of a man who had alternated between passionate—or even criminal—excess and repentance. He surveyed the inscriptions on the houses gladly, and exclaimed, with indescribable satisfaction, "Now at last I have found the land of Perfect Ascertainment," and he sighed with the relief with which, after much travelling, a tired wanderer lights upon a good inn. Then he proceeded to talk to these islanders and question them, each at his own threshold, beginning at the house of a cobbler, and going on from one to another till only the dwelling of the head-man remained. His steps lagged more slowly after each visit, as if he had been disappointed, and after he left I noticed that the lighted signs (remember it was but a dream) changed, and the original wording was replaced by the word Doubt. The land of Certainty was changed to a land of Doubt. In some obscure way the vision had been suggested by the book. It was followed by no exact interpretation, but was a continuation in the subconscious of my waking thought. For doubt had assailed me as I read the familiar pages. Let me try to unravel the thread of thought.

When Mr. Swinburne wrote "*Atalanta in Calydon*" he was a great poet. He had come at a period when the old foundations of belief were receiving a succession of shocks and he at once enrolled himself in the ranks of the besiegers. But the spirit of poetry watched over those early years and kept him back from mere partisanship. Vision, brain, imagination, were at their best when he wrote:

For the dead man no home is;
Ah, better to be
What the flower of the foam is
In fields of the sea,

That the sea-waves might be as my raiment, the gulf-stream a garment for me,
or

Who shall seek thee and bring
And restore thee thy day,
When the dove dipt her wing
And the oars won their way

Where the narrowing Symplegades whitened the straits of Propontis with spray?

Those who read that poem when it came out must have felt that here at last, amid a million echoes, was an authentic voice. A singer had arisen who had laid aside the conventionalities and traditions in which his predecessors had been swathed—a singer of fine energy, independence and originality. Would the promise of that dawn be fulfilled? Now that the word *finis* is placed to his career, the question has to be answered with a negative. Once and again flashes of the old inspiration were to return; but he who had carried the banner of Doubt now assumed a certainty of his own, and the rebel against the traditions of the elders became the slave of his own mannerism. Between *Atalanta* and *Erechtheus* what a contrast! How feebly the stanzas of "*Off Shore*" echo those I have quoted!

What were the reasons of this decay, or at any rate stoppage of growth? In one respect only did Mr. Swinburne remain the same. From first to last he has been an acknowledged master of the technique, the mechanics of verse-making. The inspiration is not so obvious. It appears to me that at the beginning Mr. Swinburne sang as the linnets do, because they must. Afterwards, if a homely simile may be allowed, his goods were shop-made—study-made, if the

phrase be more acceptable. Always a student, he now began to rummage history for themes to sing about, satisfied if he could show on them his unexampled ingenuity of rhyme and rhythm. His gift was lyric; but compare him with Robert Burns, our greatest lyric poet, and the difference is at once apparent. The one wrote directly from the heart, the other from some version of the hearts of other people. Often the verbal melody only conceals or weakens what it ought to express. In English literature the strongest and finest effects are produced by very simple methods. The tragic ending of every man's career is voiced in Mark Antony's command

Unarm Eros: the long day's task is done

or

After Life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

The line Tennyson most admired in Wordsworth shows no sign of artifice:

Her dwelling was the light of setting sun.

The contrast of method will be seen by comparing Wordsworth's oft-quoted lines with the treatment of a kindred thought by Swinburne. Wordsworth wrote

Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness

But trailing clouds of glory do we come . . .

Swinburne's theme is different, but the passage will serve to illustrate the difference of treatment:

What price could pay with earth's whole weight of gold
One least flushed roseleaf's fold
Of all this dimpling store of smiles that shine
From each warm curve and line,
Each charm of flower-sweet flesh, to reillumine
The dappled rose-red bloom
Of all its dainty body, honey-sweet
Clenched hands and curled-up feet,
That on the roses of the dawn have trod
As they come down from God,
And keep the flush and colour that the sky
Takes when the sun comes nigh,
And keep the likeness of the smile their grace
Evoked on God's own face
When, seeing this work of his most heavenly mould,
He saw that it was good?

Here the cloying adjectives weaken and spoil the effect. The method of Browning offers a still more striking contrast. We do not for a moment wish to weigh one against the other, but it is instructive to note how each goes about his task. The passage is from a very beautiful poem of Swinburne's:

Dear to the heart of man is a goal that he may not reach.

Browning is not so anxious about harmony, but does not mind being abrupt and jerky if he can only bring out the very bones of his argument:

A man's reach must exceed his grasp
Or what's a Heaven for?

And compare these verses from a deserted grave:

Or they lived their life through, and then went whither?
And were one to the end; but what end who knows?
Love deep as the sea as a rose must wither,
As the rose-red seaweed that mocks the rose.
Shall the dead take thought for the dead to love them?
What love was ever as deep as a grave?
They are loveless now as the grass above them
Or the wave?

All are at one now, roses and lovers,
Not known of the cliffs and the fields and the sea,
Not a breath of the time that has been hovers
In the air now soft with a summer to be.
Not a breath shall there sweeten the seasons hereafter
Of the flowers or the lovers that laugh now or weep,
When as they that are free now of weeping and laughter
We shall sleep,

with

Dear dead women, with such hair too—what's become of all the gold
Used to hang and brush their bosoms?

After these quotations, it does not seem to be necessary to point a moral or adorn a tale. It only occurred to me that, after his high achievement and most brilliant success in "Atalanta in Calydon," Mr. Swinburne reversed the process of the islanders of my dream and passed from the land of Doubt to that of Certainty. He had won success on certain lines, and on those lines he proceeded to work as if in the belief that there could be no other. Because he wrote "Atalanta," a place among the immortals must be allotted him, but it would be hard to select from the enormous quantity of other books that he wrote another poem that is fit to be placed on an equality beside it. He did not listen to that voice which a great contemporary of his heard calling him "On and ever on." X.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY JOURNALISM.

The "London Gazette."

IT has been said that the business of a newspaper is to give us the daily history of the world in which we live. And if that be so, the world has changed vastly in the last two centuries. A packet of *London Gazettes*, "published by authority" in 1691-92, has come into our hands, and their brief simplicity presents a perfect contrast to the irrelevant volubility of to-day. In the first place, the *Gazette* is a single sheet, not much larger than an octavo page; in the second, it appeared but twice a week—on Monday and on Thursday. Thus was the ancient curiosity easily satisfied, and the idle citizen had no excuse for wasting all the hours of the morning in the perusal of his journal. Nor did the *Gazette* indulge in commentary. It knew not the soporific seduction of the leading article. Its province was to inform not to advise, and it aimed at packing its information into the smallest possible space. Here, for instance, is the announcement of a royal wedding: "Berlin, May 8. On the 29th past was celebrated here the marriage between the Duke of Courland and the Princess Elizabeth of Brandenburg, with great solemnity." That is all, and it is sufficient. But it is very different from the picturesque report, with blurred photographs of the victims, which would appear not nine days after but the next morning in our modern prints. Or take this announcement, made on June 11th, 1691: "Lisbon, May 27. The Queen of Portugal was this day brought to bed of a Prince, to the great joy of this Court." Two lines are enough, and we can measure the propriety of yesterday by the indiscretion of to-day. A similar event is expected in another Court, and the papers have long been filled with premonitory announcements, galling no doubt to the Queen herself and completely discounting the interest of the news when it arrives.

The year 1691-92 was of considerable importance. The Battle of the Boyne had not given peace to Ireland, and William III. was still unsettled upon his throne. But the national excitement, if it existed, did not communicate itself to the *London Gazette*. We can imagine nothing more free from emotion than this placid sheet. For instance, "on the 4th of May, at 9 at night, Major Wood marched from Mountmelick to Castle-Cuff with 300 foot . . . and 50 horse of Colonel-Byerley's; he divided the foot into several parties in order to surprise the Rapparees in the Woods and Bogs, and kept with the horse along the skirts of the Bog to hinder their escape; by which means they killed 70 of the Rapparees, and took some of their cattle. Major Wood . . . was returning with the said horse and foot, it being about 10 in the morning, when he discovered two bodies of men of the late King James's Army marching silently between the wood and the mountains." There is a simple dignity in this report which you will look for vainly in the newspapers of to-day. Even if we omit the admirable phrase, "marching silently between the wood and the mountains," the account is still a model of the craft. It does not aim at sensation; it exaggerates nothing; and it bids us wonder whether the modern method, with its showers of lead and its death-dealing bombs, is any better than the plain truth of ancient times. Warfare, indeed, was not then for the public an affair of wild hysteria. The people had no desire to make a scandal of its history. In one of these you read this brief announcement: "Mark Baggot, the spy, who was taken in Woman's Clothes, and sentenced to die by a Court Martial, was hanged at Dublin yesterday." What a fuss the papers of to-day would make of such an event! First we should have pictures of Mark Baggot, in man's and woman's clothes. Then there would be an interview with the artist who made his disguise. Then his family would be invited to say that it knew all along that Mark would come to the gallows, and an old schoolfellow, now a churchwarden, would point the moral that thrift and sobriety are rewarded in this as well as in the next world. Here again we say that the old fashion was the better.

But events as well as newspapers moved then with a surprising leisureliness. On October 12th, 1691, it is announced that the King had arrived at the Hague from Loo. "This day," the report proceeds, "His Majesty was present in the Council of State, to settle the State of the War for the year ensuing. And about the end of the next week, if the Wind be fair, it's believed His Majesty will embark for England." In all this there is no hurry. War was an enterprise to which men looked forward without fear or fever. They made their plans a year ahead, and, like Cæsar, went into winter quarters when the cold weather came. In brief, steam and the telegraph have given us other conventions of life, and we must live in accord with them, contemning the old *Gazette*, with its sound English and its absence of false effect, and worshipping the over-coloured sensation, provided us day by day by the reporter, who has lost the faculty of observation and sees only in phrases.

But there is a human as well as a political interest in the *London Gazette*, which records the common events of every day as well as the quiet movements of kings and armies. Here is a brief report of Lord Mohun's acquittal of the charge of murdering Mountford the actor. There is an announcement that Killigrew, Delaval and Clouesley Shovell will take charge of the Fleet. And the ancient advertisements bring back to us as vividly as possible a picture of the life that is past. One day we are told that a little diamond drop, lost in Whitehall, is to be brought to the

Princess's backstairs, and that the finder will be rewarded with £5 5s. Another day a black boy has run away from his master. He is "called John Moor, aged ten years, having a dark fustian frock on, a silver collar about his neck, and a silver ring in his left ear, with a scar on his left cheek." Nor are the arts forgotten. There are sales of pictures at Will's Coffee-house and elsewhere. There is a notice of the Music Meeting, in which the Italian woman sings, and which is held every Tuesday in York Buildings. Now and again a book is announced—the second edition of Charles Cotton's translation of Montaigne, or "The Seaman's Grammar and Dictionary, explaining all the difficult terms in navigation, with the manner of working a ship in all weathers . . . with composition for making fireworks useful in war, both by sea and land," etc. And as the winter approaches, the season of the highwaymen begins, and every *Gazette* has its advertisement of alarm. On January 21st, 1692, Mr. Henry Lambe, goldsmith in Lombard Street, was set upon within a mile of Acton by highwaymen, one of whom, mounted on a dark roan mare about 15 hands high, with a crimson velvet saddle, was killed. The gentlemen of the road had a dandyism of their own. John Robinson, a famous highwayman, is described as wearing "a white camlet coat, under it an ash-coloured coat with silver buttons and silver button holes, and a scarlet waistcoat with silver lace." About him was found a ring with a posie, "no recompence but love," and he lay in Maidstone Gaol splendidly attired. It is long since these gallant adventurers danced without the music; long since they kept sheep by moonlight on desolate common or wind-swept heath; but the record of their elegance still stands in the *Gazette*, to show that they were far better men than the Bill Sykeses of a later age. In conclusion, we cannot put aside this bundle of old *Gazettes* without reflecting what our newspapers will have to say two hundred years hence, if their wood-pulp survives the wasting process of time. Will they not appear, to those who know not the hurrying fever of this age, a mass of ill-assorted go-sip and irrelevant triviality? At any rate, we look back with a greater pleasure than we look forward, and we should be grateful to this chance collection of *Gazettes* if it had given us no other image than that of "King James's Army marching silently between the wood and the mountains."

CHARLES WHIBLEY.

MORE BALLADS.

Folk-songs from Somerset, by Cecil Sharp. Fifth Series. (Barnicott and Pearce, Taunton.)

MR. CECIL SHARP continues to work at his profitable mine, and shows us the nuggets of various values which he has dug up. The fifth parcel seems but little inferior to the first, and inclines a man, as Moth says to Armado, "to jig off a tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet, humour it with turning up your eyelids; sigh a note, and sing a note; sometime through the throat, as if you swallowed love with singing love; sometime through the nose, as if you snuffed up love by smelling love." The whole passage shows both how little folk-singers have changed and how well Shakespeare appreciated them. With the now well-assured position which his zeal has rightly earned, Mr. Sharp should have gained more wisdom in editing and harmonising than he had at first; but he refuses to hear the remonstrance of his reviewers. Again he has mated melodies to words which do not belong to them, with an immediate loss of interest. Again he has wasted space by publishing songs which have already been in substance before his public. The pretty cadence of his "Chesapeake," for instance, is not enough to make it worth while to republish that less valuable ditty; nor is "My Man John" enough removed from "The Keys of Canterbury" to be worth his space. Again, some of the finest tunes, like "Jenny of the Moor," are smothered in a too elaborate accompaniment, and to make an end of grumbling, again, the arrangement of the openings is perverse. No less than eight times is the reader exasperated to find the words of one song and the music of another on one opening, while he is often invited to turn the page at a most irrelevant moment. When these blemishes and some others have been noted and deplored, the reader must confess his astonishment that songs so beautiful as "Bedlam" (wretched title), "Lord Thomas of Winesberry," "Mary in the Silvery Tide" and the sprightly dance of "Driving Away at the Smoothing Iron," should come out of remote and rustic cottages. That these four melodies, and the more extraordinary "Sprig of Thyme," should be appreciated among labouring people, as they have been and still are, should make the townsman reconsider his too hasty theory that his cousin Hodge is a dullard or lacking in art feeling. Editors who, in Herrick's words,

Sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes,
Who write of Youth, of Love;—and have access
By these to sing of cleanly wanton-ness,

should either print boldly or Bowdlerise unhesitatingly. Mr. Sharp cannot make up his mind to either course. He prunes scantily and makes a great fuss in the notes about the shocking things he has pruned away. Really, if we must have fig-leaves, then we must; but to assure all visitors that we have most carefully fig-leaved all our statues and to ask them to admire the fine cut of such primitive tailoring, is not exactly the way to set the prudish at their ease or to better the frank nudities of Nature. The promise of some folk-dances and children's singing-games is a pleasant passage in this book, which can excuse some of the blemishes here pointed out. Such an additional volume would be very welcome.

A PROMISING FIRST NOVEL.

Olive in Italy, by Moray Dalton. (T. Fisher Unwin.)

WE doubt whether the bright green covers of Mr. Unwin's "First Novel Library" have ever enclosed a more successful first venture than this of Mr. Moray Dalton's. The interest of the story never flags; the description of Olive's adventures in Siena, Florence and Rome and of the life of those cities is extremely vivid, and the book contains several characters it is not easy to forget. Olive Agar is a charming heroine. Left an orphan and almost penniless she goes to live at Siena with her last surviving relatives, a middle-class Italian family. On her way out she meets a pianist named Jean Avenel, and her love for him sustains her through all her struggles and difficulties. And the struggles are hard. She has to fight for

her honour with a picturesque cad named Prince Tor di Rucca, who has already indirectly been the cause of her cousin Gemma's tragic death; she has to struggle to earn enough to live on as a teacher of English in Siena, as a companion to an intolerable but well-described American girl in Florence and as an artist's model in Rome. Eventually, however, she finds happiness, though it was nearly snatched from her soon after she learnt that the obstacle which prevented her marriage with Avenel would be removed. The story has, naturally enough, its weak points. The long arm of coincidence is in places unduly stretched, and Avenel's opportunity of getting a divorce occurs rather too obviously at the right moment. His reappearance, also, after his American tour is too aptly timed

to be quite plausible. But these are minor flaws in a novel which gives a very vivid picture of Italian life, introduces us to a number of really interesting people and tells a love story which is at once fresh, human and delightful.

BOOKS TO ORDER FROM THE LIBRARY.

Gervase, by Mabel Dearmer. (Macmillan.)
Treasure Trove, by C. O. Dawson-Scott. (Heinemann.)
The Romance of a Nun, by Alix King. (Rebman.)
Tales of Unrest, by Joseph Conrad. (T. Fisher Unwin.)
Folk Songs from Somerset (Fifth Series). (Barnicott and Pearce.)
["NOVELS OF THE WEEK" ARE REVIEWED ON PAGE lviii.]

FIRE INSURANCE MARKS.

THE frequenters of the London streets may occasionally see an old tablet with an emblem and name of an insurance office fixed upon the front of a house. Some years ago this was a common sight, but to-day a few only of these marks remain. As very little is known by the general public of the old practice of fixing marks upon houses, a few notes on this curious custom may be of interest to our readers. There are several references in literature to these marks; thus Cowper, in his poem on "Friendship" (1782), writes:

Like Hand-in-Hand Insurance plates.

But perhaps the best-known one is in "The New Tory Guide" (1816). It is a special allusion to the Prince Regent:

Though I've seen him with badges and
orders all shine
Till he look'd like a house that was
over insured.

The writer here infers too much, for the existence of several marks on a single house did not indicate that the house was insured in more than one office, but merely that the old marks were not removed as they ought to have been.

Attempts at the protection of property from fire have been common from early times, particularly the employment of watchmen, bells, signals, etc. Thus in Sherborne Abbey Church there is a fire-bell inscribed "J.W.T.C. 1652," with the following irreverent couplet:

Lord quench this furious flame
Arise, run, help, put out the same.

It was not until after the Great Fire of London that the present system of fire insurance was instituted, although some attempts had been made previously to deal with losses by means of insurance. In 1667 Dr. Nicholas Barbon opened an insurance office, and in the following year the scheme of B. Delaune was issued; but it was not until 1680 that the first successful office, styled the "Fire Office," was opened. It is described as situated at the back of the Royal Exchange, that is, to the north of that building. Naturally, this office took as its emblem the figure of the phoenix, and hence came to be called by that name in 1705. It is a rather curious fact that the early fire offices took their names from the emblems they adopted, and not, as might be expected, the emblem from the names; for instance, the Hand-in-Hand Office was at first named the "Amicable Contributors for Insuring from Loss by Fire," but soon became known by its present name on account of its emblem of the clasped hands; and the Sun Office was known officially as the Company of London Insurers before it accepted the title of its emblem.

Mr. F. B. Relton, in his valuable "Account of the Fire Insurance Companies" (1893), writes that there is "no information whether Dr. Barbon made use of marks to indicate buildings which were insured with him; but we are disposed to think that if he did not supply firemen neither did he supply his policyholders with such tokens." It is known that the fire office which succeeded Dr. Barbon in 1680 maintained a body of firemen in livery with badges, the emblem being a phoenix. This office also instituted the use of marks on houses. In one of the earlier prospectuses put forth



HAND-IN-HAND: 1696.

founded in 1696, and the original title was the long one of "Contributors for Insuring Houses, Chambers or Rooms from loss by Fire, by Amicable Contribution." This was reduced first to "Amicable Contributors for Insuring from loss by Fire," then to "Amicable Contributorship," and later on "Hand-in-Hand" was adopted from the name given to it originally by its customers and the public on account of the fire-mark of a couple of hands clasped, as seen in the figure here given. The regulations of this office also provided that no house, chamber or rooms were to be deemed insured until the mark was placed thereon. It was decided in 1699 to attach to the office a fire brigade of eight watermen, provided with caps, coats and breeches, also with badges, to be the marks of the office. It was defined that the colour of the coats, caps and breeches should be "blew lined with red, a red edging being put upon y^e same." The copper badges were to be worn when the men were employed in extinguishing fires. The office held a bicentenary celebration on November 12th, 1896; but apparently there was no special commemoration in 1796, only an improvised procession of watermen, then renamed firemen. Each of these men carried a silver-headed staff with the emblem of the office.

The Sun Fire Office was founded with that title in 1710, and next year will celebrate its bicentenary; but it had a slightly earlier existence with the same mark of the sun when it was founded by Charles Povey. In 1708 the following regulation respecting marks was made—that all subscribers

shall have a mark representing the Sun nailed up against their houses which mark is to be numbered with the number of the subscriber's Policy and there to remain so long as the subscribers continue to pay their quarteridges. But if any of the said subscribers fail to pay their quarteridges when due then by the order of Mr. Povey the said mark shall be taken down from the house of the person so omitting to pay his or her respective quarteridges as aforesaid.

The office was originally Povey's Exchange House Fire Office, then the Company of London Insurers and in 1710 the Sun Fire Office. At the chief office in Threadneedle Street there are collected many objects of interest connected with the company, besides records and



SUN: 1710.



UNION: 1714.



WESTMINSTER: 1717.



ROYAL EXCHANGE: 1720.

documents of value. Among old fire-marks is an early one gilt with a blue ground marked 838, which is of the date 1711; another of 1759 is marked 170669. In 1710 it was announced that every person insured in the office should have a mark affixed on his house "gratis." There is a policy of 1709 of the Company of London Insurers. The policies have the arms and supporters at the head, being the sun on a shield supported by two watermen, one on either side. In 1735 and 1742 the old supporters are seen; the one on the right hand came to be called in joke the ballet-girl, from his small waist and the waterproof petticoats to protect his breeches which were worn by all watermen. In 1748 new supporters appear. There was a frequent change in these headings to the policies as new engravings were made when the old ones were worn out. Orders at one time were rigidly given for the taking down of old marks on houses. There is a notice of December 2nd, 1719, for one of the porters, named Vaughan, "to go and visit all the relinquishers of this office and take down the marks." The marks were originally made of lead, but about 1807 the material was altered to tin; for some years they have been made of copper. At the Chancery Lane branch of the Sun Fire Office a new sign of a golden sun with rays issuing from it, which projects from the front of the house, has just been set up.

It was the practice of the offices, before the establishment of the Penny Post, to send out their messengers (old firemen) to deliver the policies within a certain radius of the Royal Exchange, taking with them a supply of marks and hammer and nails to affix them if wished. In 1714, proposals were made for the foundation of the "Union or Double Hand-in-Hand Fire Office for insuring goods and merchandizes by mutual contribution in the way of the Hand-in-Hand Office for Houses." There seems to have been a working arrangement between these two offices. The Westminster Fire Office was established in 1717, and took for its device and mark the portcullis of Westminster, which, it will be seen from the figure, was a very handsome badge. The Royal Exchange Company was founded in 1720, the same year as saw the formation of the Corporation of London Assurance, and these two companies were for a time formidable rivals. It will be seen that the mark of the former company shows the second Exchange built by Edward Jarman after the Great Fire, and itself burnt in 1838. The Phoenix Office was founded in 1782, and has no kind of connection with the original fire office of 1680, although it has taken the same appropriate figure for its emblem and mark. This office is sometimes distinguished as Phoenix (No. 2). It was originally styled the New Insurance Company. The Norwich Union, with the figure of Justice as its mark, was formed in 1823 by an amalgamation of the Norwich 1792 (bearing the city arms—castle and lion) and the Norwich Union 1797, whose device was two hands clasped, painted in vermillion and gold. The last of our series of fire insurance marks is that of the Essex and Suffolk Equitable Society. The Essex Society was founded in



PHOENIX: 1782.



NORWICH UNION: 1797.



ESSEX: 1802.

Colchester, 1802, and in 1806 it added the County of Suffolk to its title.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the utility of the fire insurance marks had begun to be doubted, and in the proposals of the Albion Office, dated March 25th, 1809, was this curious announcement:

It is not the practice of this office to affix any marks on buildings. It is known that such marks are used only as a mode of advertisement. They are continued on buildings many years after policies have ceased; and afford no guide whatever to the firemen of any company to regulate the attention they might show to persons really insured. The company trusts that its conduct and character are sufficiently popular to remove the necessity of any such species of advertisement, and as the firemen of the company are enjoined to render the utmost assistance to all who need it, the security of persons insured will in no respect be diminished by the disuse of this superfluous appendage. As the messengers of the company are not put to the trouble of fixing marks, they are forbidden taking fees on delivery of policies as hitherto practised.

The excellent parody of Sir Walter Scott in the "Rejected Addresses" (1812) contains a vivid picture of the race of firemen and engines to the burning of Old Drury:

The Hand in Hand the race begun
Then came the Phoenix and the Sun,
The Exchange, where old insurers run,
The Eagle where the new.

The firemen's dress is described:

Each sought his pond'rous hobnail'd shoes,
But first his worsted hosen plied,
Push breeches next, in crimson died,
His nether bulk embraced;
Then jacket thick, of red or blue,
Whose massy shoulders gave to view
The badge of each respective crew,
In tin or copper traced.

The foremen are heroes of the occasion:

And Eagle firemen knew
'Twas Joseph Muggins, name revered,
The foreman of their crew.

But all the world knows Higginbottom:

What are they fear'd on? fools! 'od rot 'em!
Were the last words of Higginbottom.

We have seen that the several fire insurance companies adopted an emblem which was used in place of a coat of arms. This emblem was worn by the firemen as their badge; it was then adopted as a mark by each company to show the houses insured by it, the object being to indicate to the firemen the houses they were intended to save first. When the companies united in the first quarter of the nineteenth century to form a general fire brigade this indication was not needed, and the setting up of marks was to a great extent discontinued. They are now only occasionally used, but they are still made. This subject is not one which we should be likely to associate with sentiment, but according to an agent of the Sun Fire Office in Berlin a little bit of folk-lore has grown up around these marks. In 1842 the agent inserted a clause in the policies requiring the persons insured to have a mark. In explanation he wrote:

There appears to be some superstitious feeling connected with the use of the Sun mark, and it seems that it is considered as a protection in various ways by the country people. In order to protect the marks from the weather, they frequently surround them with a little wooden frame, and in the Catholic districts of Silesia people may be seen kneeling to the figure of the Sun, under the idea that it is dedicated to holy purposes. I believe that the office cannot be prejudiced by feelings of this sort among innocent people.

H. B. WHEATLEY.

ON THE GREEN.

EDITED BY HORACE HUTCHINSON.

THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE SOCIETY.

FROM the point of view of good fun and good fellowship the Oxford and Cambridge Society Tour in Lancashire and Cheshire was a great success; from the secondary and more sordid point of view of winning matches its success was, it must be admitted, but partial. The society scraped home by one point at Formby and Wallasey, lost by a margin of about the ordinary magnitude at Hoylake, and met with their Waterloo at St. Anne's, where their score was very nearly "as blank as their faces." The society team was by no means a bad one, but they almost merited the unkind description "good players permanently out of form"; there is, as a rule, one player who goes right through the tour on the top of his game, but this year there was no one who did not have his bad days and several who never had their good ones. Mr. Croome played one very good round at Hoylake, Mr. Ernest Smith was very steady throughout, and Mr. Barry won a match when playing with someone else's clubs, and there does not seem much else to say in praise of the society side. Up till this year the society have always done well in the foursomes, a form of golf in which they are more deeply versed than the golfers of the North, who cling like limpets to the four-ball match. Not even foursomes, however, were on this occasion of any avail, and it is abundantly clear that whatever the form of golf the ball "maun be hit," and the society did not hit it as well as their opponents.

THEIR OPPONENTS.

About these opponents it is possible to speak in far more glowing terms. The most inveterate and relentless of them was Mr. John Ball, who played four singles and four foursomes against the society with a uniformly successful result. It is difficult to conceive better driving than that of Mr. Ball just at present; the length is good, though not colossal; but the straightness is merely fiendish. One member of the society side calculated that, having played some four days' golf with Mr. Ball, he had to go away without the satisfaction of seeing him once off the course. Mr. Hilton played at Hoylake and Formby, and is playing a fine, confident game; Mr. Graham was hardly at his very best (influenza has had him in its grip); but Mr. Dick and Mr. Lassen were both very good, the latter putting just as well with an aluminium putter as he did last year with a cleek. Of the younger players Mr. Crummack and Mr. Todd are probably the best, and both should have a future. Mr. Crummack is a fine hitter, with a really magnificent freedom of swing, the right shoulder swooping round and under with tremendous dash; it is a style which has, as a rule, a tendency towards the slice, but Mr. Crummack does not seem to suffer in that respect. Mr. Todd's game is the very antithesis of Mr. Crummack's—easy, steady, deliberate and not too alarmingly powerful; he plays all the shots well, is a good putter and altogether a very difficult man to beat.

HOYLAKES REVISITED.

No precautions can retard the spread of the pot-bunker-making fever, and that disease has attacked the courses of Lancashire and Cheshire—with excellent results. There are several of these little additions to Hoylake—we had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Ball get into one of them—but there is nothing sensational about their position; they are not placed exactly in the middle of the course at the length of a full shot, but lurk at the sides, and he who is hitting really straight need not alarm himself particularly about them. The greens at Hoylake were undoubtedly very difficult; the ball would for the most part go into the hole if it was struck firmly and truly, but it always looked as if it would not, and this appearance of roughness in

a green has a demoralising effect on all but the very strong-minded. It remains the abiding beauty, or one of the abiding beauties, of Hoylake that a bad shot is always going further away from the hole; the inaccurate approacher cannot hope that his ill-struck shot will kick off a hill on to the green, or run round and round a punch-bowl green till it sits down happily at the bottom; the shot has got to be played.

ST. ANNE'S AND WALLASEY.

The Lytham and St. Anne's Club have also been making plenty of little bunkers near the green, and it may be suggested—very humbly—that the course would not be the worse for still a few more. Then they have made some wonderfully ingenious sandhills that stretch across the course at the seventh and eleventh holes. The bent grass which is planted on the sandhills grows at present in rather too regular and artificial a manner; but it will not be long, no doubt, before the growth becomes luxuriant and irregular, and then these vast mounds will look as wild and terrible as need be; they are really monuments of architectural ingenuity. We could not, unfortunately, go to Formby, and have not seen it since the old days before the alterations. Wallasey is a delightful course, a little blind and lucky perhaps, but full of difficulties and charms. There are certain holes in the world whereat the scenery and—most important of all—the background of the holes strike the visitor at once. "Here," he says to himself, "is the real thing." One or two of the outgoing holes at Wallasey are of this happy character—fine rolling country, sandhills, a wilderness of bents and a view of the sea. What can a man want more?

OPINION OF THE CLUBS ABOUT THE AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP.

Certainly the clubs have responded with no uncertain voice to the question addressed to them by the editor of *Golf Illustrated* as to their views on the future management of the amateur championship. Three hundred and four have expressed the opinion that the affair had better be placed in the hands of a committee appointed for the purpose by the Royal and Ancient Club, and only ten have given answer that they do not think this the best solution. It remains, of course, to be seen what, if any, effect this very emphatic expression will have on the conduct of the delegates at their meeting in May; but it is hardly to be thought that such a decided consensus can be overlooked. As the editor points out, it is a result which is representative of "all classes of clubs in every part of the kingdom," and it is distinctly an important feature that the proposal finds favour with the Irish clubs.

THE GREAT GOLFER BRAID.

There is a certain dreadful monotony about the way in which each succeeding golf season seems to begin with Braid beating everybody else. It used to be a fairly open contest between three, at least, of the best—Braid, Vardon and Taylor; but now this imperturbable Scot seems to have got just a length—his own long length—in front of the rest, and most of the reports of professional matches are records of his triumph. It is only by a little that he is the better, but it is enough—it counts; and when we try to see the reason of it, we may find it conveying a moral even to our humble selves. I do not think that it is much good for us to take thought about extending the distance of our driving by pious imitation of Braid. He himself tells us that he went to bed one night a short driver (but if that is the truth he did it a very long while ago) and woke up in the morning a long driver. It is easy to follow this example in the former operation, but we do not seem to pass the right kind of night for the second.

HIS REFORMED PUTTING.

But though he thus went to sleep to learn to drive, it is certain that he must have been quite wide awake when he taught himself to putt. For this he has done in a very painstaking and laborious way. Braid's name used to be a byword for bad putting, just as "Old Tom" was once addressed, on a letter which found its destination unerringly, without delay, as "The Misser of Short Putts, Prestwick," but now he has become a very fine putter. This is the reason that he is now top man, or looks like it—not merely sharing the tree-top. He putts fearfully slowly, bringing the aluminium putter a very long way back from the ball, exactly in the manner prescribed by the ancient wisdom of old Mr. George Glennie and the rest of them. It is terribly tantalising work to watch if you have money, or any less sordid interest, on the result; but it is deadly effective. Perhaps only a man of very philosophic temperament could persuade his muscles to go so slow on such occasions; but the extraordinary difference that the difference of his putting methods has made in Braid's game, turning him from a very bad putter into a very good one, and so from a merely very good golfer to the very best of golfers, seems as if it ought to encourage all of us to see whether the adoption of some such change of method might not work a blissful reformation in our game too, according to its degree. It is worth consideration.

ROBSON AND TURNER.

We have been just a little disappointed in the result of the match between Robson and Turner. This may seem rather a hard thing to say, both on the one and on the other of the players, for Robson won the match, which is what he set out to do, and Turner made a very good fight of it, which is, perhaps, as much as he had a right to expect. But the truth is that the winner had raised expectations so high by his last year's work that we looked to him to do miracles—which we should not have done—and he does not, in fact, appear to have played miraculously. He was a hole down on Turner's home green, and just won by a comfortable margin of two or three holes in the end.

SHAKESPEARE ON GOLF AT BLACKHEATH.

While Mr. W. Dalrymple and others are discussing the rival claims to antiquity of the Royal Blackheath Club, the Edinburgh Burgess, Honourable Company and the like, one or other of the disputants, especially an advocate of the former's, which is certainly the most venerable claim, should pay attention to the remarkable mention of "Golf Club" by Shakespeare, who knew everything, immediately following the meeting on Blackheath in which the priest robs the disguised King Henry V. If this does not give the club full warranty for the title of royal to be assumed as from that date at the very latest, where shall we look for it? All this is to be read by the curious on page 52 of the last part of the folio of 1654, or, if that rather rare book be not in every golfer's library, there is a reprint of it published by Messrs. Methuen. It is in the play of Sir John Oldcastle, the good Lord Cobham (in other dramas portrayed as Sir John Falstaff). For those whom the ordinary problems of life, such as free trade, free will and the Rules of Golf do not suffice, it is a play to be further commended as supposed to convey many indications of the great cipher. Obviously it is absurd to suppose the Blackheath Club to be as modern as the Stewart kings.

A GREETING.

The low, sweet strand,
Where songs are sung of the old green Irish land.
—Tri tam of LYONSSE.

Through England's April, ah, must now be heard
Sighed oft between
Blithe laugh of ripple and leaf and lilt of bird
A low sad threne,
For one morn's sake, when, woodlands chiming all
With peals of Spring,
The threshold dread of silence sent a call
To song's High-King.
Full swiftly he passed; nor slow to come is grief,
As well behoves;
A guest in sooth that makes not sojourn brief
In haunted groves.
And strange the hap if he could hence depart,
While mute this day
Bode Eiré's Isle, where ever the Maker's art
Bore sovran sway;
And she remembering now, fallen still and cold
The Master's hand,
What gracious words he took to laud "the old
Green Irish land."
Nay verily: but by our west's lone wave
Where wan mists fold
And lap the world's away, wild visions brave
Dimmed eyes behold:
O Fields of Faery, O dells of Paradise,
Long Youth's sweet Isle,
They deem you not a wistful heart's device
And empty wile,
And so with joy not ruth, since never a fear
Hath made them blind,
They greet him faring forth, the happy Seer
His dreams to find;
They watch burn white past many a wondrous strand
As flower of fire
The sail's wing wafted toward the loved far Land
Of Heart's Desire.

JANE BARLOW.

CORRESPONDENCE.

NEW YORK IN 1909.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—How delightful and strange to read in this maelstrom of change, rush, obliteration, lightning achievement—I cannot call it by any other name—how delightful to read Mr. Tipping's article in your admirable periodical on the preservation of ancient buildings; how difficult to realise that anyone cares for the past—indeed, that there is a past! I have not been here in ten years, and all the old familiar landmarks are gone. New York is to be judged by disappearances. And the pity of it! For there were old-fashioned spots here ten years ago, landmarks associated with social and historic events, which were dear to the hearts of old New Yorkers. They are gone now, and in their place great soaring sky-scrapers stare at each other across the narrow streets like menacing canyons—the last one, fifty storeys high, 700ft. from sidewalk! Across the square is, or rather was, the old Fifth Avenue Hotel. Last August they were selling in the old hotel its furniture and appointments, not a stone or foundation of the old structure yet disturbed. To-day (January 14th) the new sky-scraper on the site is finished; the old structure demolished, the foundations removed, new ones dug and planted, the entire present soaring building completed—all in six months! That will give you an idea of the activity here, of the calm envisagement of what would seem to be insuperable difficulties, impossibilities; the every-day triumph over what would appal a less energetic, self-confident race. Life here is a whirlwind. One is swept into it, made a part of it, before one is aware of the fact; and for the time being there is a fascination about "the pace" which, if it kills, tunes life—while life lasts!—to a high pitch. Then in moments of rest—or collapse!—the thought of quiet, picturesque England seems a dream. It becomes a reality, however, when one reads your paper on "Old Buildings"—and blesses you for it—and wakes to realise that the world is indeed made up of great immeasurable spaces, of peoples related—yes, distantly, but irreconcilable in temperament, character and mode of life. Excuse scrawl; I have written it in (flying) sections. Another revelation to you of the manner of doing things here. *An vs!*—A F. DE NAVARRO.

HOW TO COOK SPINACH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was deeply interested in Mr. Robinson's article on "An Epicure in Search of Vegetables," and particularly in his remark about spinach. As it appears on the table it is, in my experience, a useful but not very interesting

dish. Only once or twice in my experience has it been so cooked as to afford real pleasure. I wonder then if any of your correspondents could give me a recipe for preparing it in a manner that would please, say, Mr. Robinson or any other epicure. I have what is called a good plain cook, and have assisted her by rummaging through a dozen or so of cookery books, but the result so far has not been as satisfactory as it might be. Should the spinach be put in water or not? If any water, should it be hot or cold? As far as I remember the best spinach ever served to me on the table had on the top what appeared to be the yolk of an egg and looked a very attractive dish, nor did it fail to fulfil the promise made by its appearance.—IGNORANS.

THE LITTLE OWL IN SURREY

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have much pleasure in being able to record through your columns the occurrence of the little owl (*Carne Noctua*) in the Dorking district of Surrey. On the 17th inst., while walking under a group of very fine old Spanish chestnuts, from one of which I had but a few minutes previously flushed a barn-owl, my attention was attracted to a small brown bird which came out of a hole about 15ft. from the ground and flew to a neighbouring bough, where it was under observation for several minutes and was at once identified as a little owl. As the locality is a somewhat secluded one, I should think there is a reasonable chance of a pair being in the vicinity and remaining to breed. This is the first time I have seen an example of this interesting and quaint little bird in Surrey, though I believe it regularly breeds in Northamptonshire and is even on the increase there. I trust this letter will be of sufficient interest for insertion and comment in your columns.—DOUGLAS WILKINSON.

CURIOSITIES IN BIRDS'-NESTING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—From time to time I have seen or had brought to my notice many curious cases of birds having deserted or been driven from their nests. Last year I had a clutch of no less than fourteen eggs of the great tit, but on examination I found that they had evidently been laid by two birds. Seven of them were long eggs with small spots, which had been sat on for a few days and then the bird had deserted or died. The second seven were nearly hatched and had also been deserted, and these were heavily marked

with large spots. My brother once found a magpie's nest, and in climbing to investigate disturbed the old bird. He found in the nest six white eggs, which, by the way, though not unknown, are very rare; he did not touch the nest or disturb it in any way, but left it, just as it was, to see if she would lay any more. She deserted them; and instead of making a new nest, she took possession of an old one not far away, which was devoid of anything in the shape of a dome and had very little left of it but the mud. This is the only case of its kind I have ever heard of. I have seen three curious cases among partridges. The first nest was deserted through a mole having heaved up right through the middle of it and buried all the eggs except two; the nest contained thirteen eggs in all. The second nest a field-mouse had made a run through and had taken five eggs along the tunnel for some distance. This nest was not deserted. The third nest was in the middle of a field; the old bird was dead on her nest, a cow having trodden on her, and she had died without moving; some of the eggs were broken. I once found a young cuckoo in a pied wagtail's nest in a most curious place. I was hunting for some sand-martins' eggs one afternoon in the banks of the river Lugg in Herefordshire, where they occur in great numbers. On coming to a high bank overhanging the river, I lay down, looked over the edge and found my nose within a few inches of a small hole in the bank, out of which two little shining eyes and a great red mouth appeared, at the same time hissing at me. I nearly fell into the river with fright. On investigation it turned out to be a young cuckoo. The most curious thing was that the hole was only large enough to admit the wagtails, and if I had not enlarged it the cuckoo could never have got out. For bare-faced cheek among birds I think the jackdaw is first. I saw an instance of it once at which I was highly amused. There are some half-dozen pairs of these birds which nest every year in the tower of our old church. I was out in the orchard one afternoon at the time when these birds were building their nests, and I noticed them very busy collecting a lot of hair, which came from a very long-haired donkey that was moulting at that time. One of the birds somehow found out where the hair came from, for the next day I saw him standing on the donkey's back, pulling away for dear life at his hair, and when his beak was full, off he flew to his nest in the church. I think for utter impudence this would be hard to beat. I had a look at the nests some days after, and they were lined almost entirely with our donkey's hair.—H. T. WILLIAMS.

AN AUDACIOUS HERON.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I fancy that herons are known to be very shy birds, but three weeks ago one which has for some time been seen near here foregathered with the Japanese bantams, whose run is not 50ft. from this house. He partakes of their food, the bantams showing no concern, except on one day, when a great outcry was heard and the heron was seen with his head inside their house, to the great horror and consternation of one or two of them. He occasionally sits on the top, but more often stalks meditatively round. The peacocks do not like him, and have chased him away once or twice. He has been seen, when sharing the hens' food, to kill and eat a sparrow, and one day caught a pigeon and flew off with it after dashing it on the ground. All the peacocks and the bantams rushed to the rescue, with loud and lamentable outcries, but in vain. My little girl tried to photograph him, but he always flew away before she got close enough; she, however, succeeded by bringing out a towel-horse and hiding behind a couple of towels. I enclose a photograph showing the plate out of which he eats. It is evident that he only objected to the camera, not the person, as during this time he and the young peacock fell out, and, the quarrel becoming violent, my little girl stood up and waved her arms to make them stop. Neither took the slightest notice, so she threw the towels at them; even this did not frighten either, though it did stop the quarrel. The young peacock mentioned was hatched by a bantam hen; he remains deeply attached to his foster-mother and brethren, never leaves them and keeps aloof from the other peacocks. He retires to bed inside the bantam house every night with his adopted family, but what he will do when his tail grows remains to be seen.—S. G. BAIRD, Lennox-love, Haddington.

LOCAL NAMES OF BIRDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I shall be extremely grateful if any of your readers will be good enough to send me a list of local names for our British birds with the locality whence they come.—LAURENS C. SARGENT.

SMALL EGGS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Every year many poultry-keepers complain bitterly of the size of the eggs their hens produce. Unfortunately they seem to stop at this point and take no effectual steps to end it. Yet it is of more importance than formerly to produce eggs of an average size. This, by the way, means a 2oz. egg. Buyers to-day insist on having a 2oz. egg, and, oddly enough, they have been educated up to this standard by the foreigner. All the French, nearly all the Danish and a large proportion of the rest of the imported eggs average 2oz.; that is to say, a case of 120 weighs 15lb. If the foreigner finds it easy to produce a 2oz. egg, why do not our poultry-keepers? The answer, I fear, is that the Continental poultry-keeper tackles the subject more scientifically. Here in this country there has been for years a passion for forcing fowls, for encouraging early laying and for breeding from immature stock. In the bygone days of the Leghorn boom it was pointed out as a specially attractive trait of these precocious birds that if given plenty of meat when growing they could be made to lay at thirteen weeks old. It has taken some years for poultry-keepers to learn, and some have not learnt

the fact yet, that birds so forced lay small eggs all their lives. Again, the passion for "averages" is detrimental to size, though in laying competitions to-day the value as well as the number of eggs is taken into account, which is a point in the right direction. After all, it is not difficult to obtain and keep up a strain of fowls laying 2oz. eggs. An old-fashioned rule when selecting eggs for hatching was to choose the largest. These are laid by matured hens, two year olds and three year olds, and the chickens these eggs produce will lay larger eggs than the chickens hatched from pullets' eggs. Yet poultry-keepers set pullets' eggs year after year, keep some of the chickens for stock, and then complain of small eggs. It is perfectly easy to build up a strain of fowls in any breed laying 2oz. eggs; nor would it be very difficult to produce a larger egg. But this I do not advise. The number is liable to decrease; nor is there any demand for extra big eggs; buyers are glad to get them, but object to pay more for them. The first eggs, of course, that a hen lays are always the smallest, but the size gradually increases; a hen in her second laying season lays larger eggs than she did before, but generally not so many. In her third year, if kept, she will lay considerably fewer, but as big as, if not bigger than, the year before. Therefore the remedy for small eggs is clear.—C. D. LESLIE.

CHILDREN AND WILD FLOWERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—At this season of the year, when wild flowers are so abundant in all our fields and woods, it has struck me that many people might be glad of a suggestion which may not have occurred to them before. We all know how children love picking flowers, and I find the school-children here are delighted to gather bunches after school and bring them to me next morning to send to a London hospital, where they are thoroughly appreciated. It is also a good thing for the children to feel they are helping others and brightening the dreary days of poor sufferers. I pack them in old cardboard dress-baskets, in which they travel well.—M.

THE ORIGIN OF THE COTLEY HOUNDS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have received a most interesting letter from one who has hunted with the Cotley Harriers for six-and-thirty seasons. He writes that the Cotley Hounds were established in 1796 by the late Mr. Thomas Deane of Cotley, near Charl, grandfather of the present Master. Another member of the same family had previously kept hounds for many years. The writer agrees with me that the original blood came from the Knowstone Kennels, and he tells me that fresh blood was introduced from the kennels of the Rev. Harry Farr Yeatman of Stock House, Dorset. This gentleman had a



AN AUDACIOUS HERON.

famous pack of harriers. But the main lines of Cotley blood came from the old Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds through Mr. Froude's Knowstone pack. My correspondent tells me, which I did not know, that Lord Fortescue obtained his strains from the stag-hound kennels at Badminton, which were kept there before the fifth Duke changed from stag to fox, in, it is said, 1763. This brings us considerably nearer to the French hounds, and it would be interesting to connect the original Beaufort Stag-hounds with the Royal kennels of France, which I have no doubt could be done. There is a kennel book at Badminton—which I have seen—containing a list of the old Beaufort Stag-hounds; but I do not recollect that there was any information as to the origin of these hounds. Nevertheless, I think the lemon and badger pie colouring is, as the Comte de Cantelau believes, an evidence of the near relationship with, if not of identical descent from, the Royal white hounds of the Kings of France.—X.

RATS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—May I protest against the publication of such unnecessarily cruel methods of destruction as are advocated in your issue of April 10th.—DOUGLAS ENGLISH.

[If Mr. Douglas English can suggest a humane method of getting rid of rats he will earn very general gratitude.—ED.]

A WILD RED DEER AS A PET.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The accompanying photographs are of a tame wild red deer hind which was brought up and made a pet of by Miss Venner, at the Town Farm, West Anstey, Dulverton. Last summer the hind, when it was a very small calf, ran down the lane leading to Town Farm, and, being seen, was shut up by the people there. The old hind, its mother, hung round about for days, but eventually went away. The calf was brought up by Miss Venner



COMING OVER A DEVONSHIRE BANK.

on the bottle, etc., and now is very tame. It remains to be seen whether it will become wild again. This would be more likely to occur about October, when the stags are belling.—H. E. HATT.

SOLITARY SWALLOW.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I do not know whether it may interest your readers to know that on Saturday, April 10th, one solitary swallow was seen, by myself and a friend, sitting on the telegraph wires at Quendon, near Newport, Essex. So far I have not heard of others being seen. Also, while walking through some woods in Hertfordshire the other week, I was somewhat surprised to see a pure white pheasant fly across my path a few feet ahead. On reaching the village I told several people (who knew the woods well) what I had seen, and I was told that a white pheasant was by no means uncommon, and that they had seen at least one bird so coloured for some time past. It would be interesting to know if white specimens have been seen by other readers of COUNTRY LIFE.—A. LEWIN-WARNER.

THE TREATMENT OF DORMICE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In your issue of March 6th last, Mr. J. G. Davenport asks if dormice thrive in captivity. The answer is, "With careful treatment, certainly." Some years ago I was in the habit of keeping them from time to time, and although I have successfully kept one occasionally in quite a small cage, yet generally I put my pets in one fully 2ft. high, 2ft. wide and 1ft. or 1ft. 6in. through. In a top corner was fitted a tiny chamber with an orifice in it for ingress and egress, into which I used to insert a raw or wood-shavings, but never hay. This the mice would break up and shred into strips in order to construct a cosy bed. Besides this bedchamber, I used further to embellish the cage with a miniature tree, one small limb of which joined the orifice in the sleeping-box. And the bottom of the cage, which was in the form of a tray or shallow drawer (the tree did not, of course, quite reach it), and which I always kept scrupulously clean and well covered with pine sawdust, could be withdrawn and replaced at pleasure. The front of the cage was formed of very closely meshed wire; but glass could be used advantageously, with small breathing holes punched in the roof of the hutch. In such a cage as this six



HIND TROTTING.

mice or more may be housed easily. Turning to the food question, I never found it advisable to give my dormice water; the apples I always gave provided them with sufficient moisture, and in their proper season other fruits, such as cherries, grapes and blackberries, were eagerly welcomed. As solid nutriment, nuts are all that are necessary; and nuts they must have, otherwise their teeth, from want of work to keep them to a proper length, will become long, so long that the tiny creatures will starve to death from

an inability to open their mouth. Should the food supply be scarce, dormice, summer or no, will indulge in protracted slumber, and, of course, in the winter this hibernation is of regular occurrence, though in a state of domestication its duration mainly depends upon the heat of the room in which they are kept. If you ever require to awaken a slumbering mouse, do so by holding it in the hands; never thaw one at a fire. With proper attention I have kept individual mice over two years.—JOHN WALPOLE-BOND.

HUMANE RABBIT TRAPS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The method of trapping rabbits which has been in vogue for several generations is one which does not commend itself to those who, in destroying vermin or keeping down redundant animal life, wish to do so by causing as little suffering as possible. The Society for the Suppression of (cruel) Steel Traps was founded nearly four years ago, with the laudable object of securing a really humane rabbit catcher or killer. It held one competition, three years ago last October, when Lord Tollemache and a very distinguished committee of country gentlemen, representing all parts of the country, very carefully examined some 200 "propositions" in the form of new inventions, and having weeded them carefully out, selected four for practical field trial. The result was that none of the new traps came up to expectations. I, the hon. secretary of the society, am going to make another attempt to secure a really humane trap—one which shall either humanely catch or humanely kill. And with this object in view I ask for the support of those readers of COUNTRY LIFE who will assist in this very necessary work. Let it be mentioned that the provision of a new trap will not destroy the trap-making industry of Wednesfield, Staffordshire—as was rashly assumed three or four years ago—but will rather increase it if a trap can be found which shall do away with the very



JUMPING WIRE-NETTING.

grave objections which many people now feel regarding the cruel Dorset Steel-toothed Trap, at present almost universally used.—SIDNEY TRIST.

FOUR PASSER LE TEMPS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—There is a puzzle I have seen in a Tyrolean village, which at first sight looks so simple, but in trying to solve it one soon thinks differently, and, as it may be of use to some readers of your interesting paper, who may suddenly find themselves hundreds of feet below or above the earth, and be, like Micawber, "waiting for something to turn up," or be snowed up in a train, I will try to explain the nature of the puzzle, hoping I may be understood. The puzzle is that of twenty-four pieces of wood or paper numbered. The numbers must be well mixed and placed on a table in five rows (in working out the puzzle it matters not which row has only four numbers in it, providing that when the puzzle is complete there are only four numbers in the bottom row), and the puzzle is solved by moving first one and then another to the left or right, up or down, but not over, as is done in playing dominoes, until they are in the correct order. Where one's patience gets tried is with two or three of the last numbers, because, no matter how one tries to avoid it, either 23 or 21 will be where 24 should be, and until they have been put into their right places the puzzle is not solved. Order when playing:

20	18	16	19	17
10	8	6	9	7
24	21	+	23	22
15	13	14	12	11
5	1	3	4	2

For example: By moving 14 along to where the cross is, and putting 13 in the place of 14, 1, which is immediately under where 13 was, can be pushed up another row until it is where it should be at the finish:

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	